RELIGION AND ART

Alessandro Della Seta

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FIG. 160.—MARCUS AURELIUS PERFORMING A SACRIFICE.

Pal. dei Conservatori, Rome.

(*Photo Alinari.*)

[*See page* 276.]

RELIGION & ART

A STUDY IN THE EVOLUTION OF SCULPTURE, PAINTING AND ARCHITECTURE

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AND 200 ILLUSTRATIONS

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PREFACE

"Man would never have set himself the task of representing men because of the beauty and nobility of their form. The form of men appeared beautiful and noble because it had served to clothe the gods. Man therefore possessed art because he had religion; but he possessed a great art, such as the Greek and Christian art, because when the sense of magic was destroyed he vivified these religions by a content of myth and history."

THIS phrase, which closes and sums up Della Seta's book, also gives its keynote and its theme. The author traces the rise of art from magical and ritual observances, and leads us on to behold its liberation from the yoke of magic, first by the influence of the Greek spirit, and later by the still more potent influence of Christianity. Never, since the application of scientific methods to the criticism of art, have conclusions, whether as to the origins or the ultimate fate of art, been applied within so wide an area of phenomena. Della Seta begins with the epoch of the mammoth and the reindeer, and traverses the vast spaces that lead from the magical carvings and paintings of Bruniquel or Altamira to the Renaissance and modern times. The vastness of the synthesis and the novelty of the views expressed induce me to accept the author's invitation to contribute a few preliminary remarks to the English edition of his book. Readers unfamiliar with the train of ideas set astir by Della Seta may welcome a brief indication of its most salient features. On the other hand, those already at home in questions of *Religionsforschung* and in modern problems of æsthetics will, I trust, neglect these introductory pages and attack straightway the substance of the book.

Ac. 1843

Preface

I

The Italian edition appeared early in 1912, a date useful to bear in mind in view of the many recent books dealing with approximately the same subject. Its title (in the original *Religione e arte figurata*) might lead one to suppose that the author was exclusively concerned with art as the expression of the human form. But so keen and vigorous a thinker as Della Seta knows that the time has long passed when research in the domain of æsthetics could be restricted to any one of its branches. His examination of plastic art in relation to a people's culture and religious beliefs is invariably accompanied by a brief but penetrating inquiry into the parallel phenomena of literature, of music, or of dancing. Dancing has loomed large in speculations as to the origins of art. The evolution of the choros of Greek tragedy from the mimetic dance, for instance, exemplifies in brief Della Seta's root idea that art, as it rises from the phase of ritual, despoils itself of its magical character in order to become pure æsthetic manifestation.

One by one, Della Seta marshals the peoples of antiquity and makes them reveal the sources of their religious ideas and the art which helped to give these ideas force. Among primitive races, and others powerless or unwilling to throw off the yoke of magic, art has a practical and utilitarian purpose: man creates the images of those objects over which he desires control and for which he asks divine protection (ex-voto). In the second stage he fashions the image—the idol, or the power which he desires to bring within his reach that so he may cajole or coerce it into granting the needed protection. This magical art, in other words, has in view self-preservation both for now and hereafter, and remains indifferent to the dealings of the divinity with man in the past. But self-preservation, "the strongest interest of human nature," brings with it, as Cumont has well observed, "faith in a personal survival of the soul and even of

the body." * Consequently the art of peoples in what Della Seta calls the "iconolatrous" stage tends in large measure to remain a funeral art, in which every effort is made to ensure the survival of the dead by surrounding him with objects imitated from reality and by fashioning an image into the closest resemblance of himself, as though this likeness were a sure pledge of his survival. The Egyptians, owing to their constant preoccupation with life after death, pushed the possibilities of this magical art to the furthest limit. Della Seta incisively sets forth and analyses the differences between the art of Egypt, of Babylon and of Assyria, and of the Kreto-Myceneans, and shows why each race in turn—even the rich Minoan civilization that contained in germ so much that went to make the greatness of Greek art—failed to throw off the tyranny of magic. Among the Eastern peoples a tendency to symbolism was to a certain extent the obstacle to development, since symbolism checks the growth of the mythopœic spirit—of that power to reflect about the relations and the acts of divine beings † which was to prove the liberator of art. The Jews alone stood from the first outside the magic circle, but a Judaic figured art was made impossible by an over-exalted monotheism which raised the divinity too far above the sphere of man and resulted in a horror of images. Thus the incomparable historical material of the Bible found no expression in art before the advent of Christianity. But Christianity, by bringing the divinity down to earth and making this divinity a subject for art, enabled monotheism to take the step which the Hebraic conception of religion had made impossible.

The first decisive step towards the liberation of art from the magic phase ‡ was to be taken by the Greeks. In Greece

* F. Cumont, *Oriental Religions* (Eng. trans., p. 43).

† "Myths are the outcome of reflection—of reflection about the gods and their relations to one another or to men or to the world."—Jevons, *Idea of God in Early Religions*, p. 33.

‡ Della Seta's use of the word "magic" as equivalent to religion in its earlier stages will probably not commend itself to every reader. Dr. Frazer's

art was inspired by a religion which strove from the first to substitute for the worship of the god's image, the contemplation of the divine nature as revealed in his acts; hence the rise of a new mythological art, unconcerned with the ultramundane existence of the dead and projected towards a past where play the deeds of heroes and of gods. The part played by the Homeric poems in forming what we may call the historical conscience of Greece is dealt with afresh in a vigorous passage. The Homeric poems, however, could only bring about partial emancipation, and Della Seta well defines Greek art as a superb compromise between the popular demand for image and votive statue and the aristocratic preference, on the part of the more cultured, for narrative mythological subjects. It was the triumph of Greek art to lift itself gradually from the sphere of ritual into that of religion. To a coarser imagination, it is true, the grand ceremonial carved on the frieze of the Parthenon might appear the direct negative of Della Seta's view, or be held to mark a retrograde step towards the magical function of art. But to Della Seta the frieze is the grand exception that proves the rule. It represents, he argues, the successful effort of genius to divest the rendering of a processional scene of the magical character necessarily attaching to all ritual. The contrast established by our author between the spirit of the procession that enfolds the cella of the Parthenon and the similar scene on the enclosing wall of the *Ara Pacis Augustæ* is perhaps the best that has yet been said of the difference between the art of Greece and that of Rome. These pages should help to a saner view of Greek religion also. To judge, as too often happens, of the religion of an educated Greek of the Periclean age from stray and obscure survivals of primitive ritual is like making the average English churchman responsible for primitive customs still in vogue among certain

attempt to differentiate magic from religion is familiar to readers of the *Golden Bough*; see R. R. Marett, "From Spell to Prayer," in *The Threshold of Religion*, p. 33 ff.; cf. Jevons, *Idea of God*, p. 117 ff.

English country-folk, or the average Roman Catholic for the obscure superstitions of the peasants of the Abbruzzi.

The art of Etruria, like that of Latium, Della Seta considers as little more than a slavish imitation of the Greek. In Etruria we see Greek art forms brought into the service of a religion that asks for protection in the present, and of a ritual of the dead which, like that of ancient Egypt, strives to secure assurance of a future life. Both aims were incompatible with the ideas that inspired the borrowed art, which, accordingly, was early degraded to purely decorative uses. This might likewise have been the fate of Greek art in Rome, had not Rome discovered a new motive force in the Imperial idea, which, by giving a central theme to the art of the Empire, was to bear it along once more in an ascending line, leaving the purely Greek element to follow on another track which led eventually to decay. Professor Della Seta has done me the honour to quote in support of his theories views which I have expressed in my book on *Roman Sculpture*. But here our paths diverge; for while Della Seta believes that the central theme called into existence by the Imperial figure was to die with the Empire and to remain sterile for the after development of art, my own belief is that the influence endured—long as an underground current maybe, yet destined to rise again to the surface and to govern the principles of plastic art from the early Renaissance onwards. I hold firmly that centralization was Rome's greatest, perhaps only, contribution to the treasury of art forms she had taken over from Greece.

In discussing the rise and development of Christian art Della Seta breaks definitely with the false notions that have clouded our appreciation of the art forms of early Christianity. Much, it is true, had already been done towards this end by Von Sybel in his *Christliche Antike*, where the subject was brought for the first time within the sphere of the other arts of antiquity. A remarkable result of modern research round and about early Christianity is to bring out its inde-

pendent character. Cumont has repeatedly warned us against too hastily concluding that analogies between certain early Christian practices and Mithraic rites are necessarily proofs of plagiarism or imitation;* Delahaye has finally disposed of the theories which used to link the cult of the early Christian martyrs to that of the pagan heroes.† Now Della Seta, while fully admitting the subsequent debt of Christian to pagan form, vindicates for the earliest Christian art—even for the paintings of the Catacombs, which have been treated with such contempt by students both of pagan and of later mediæval art—a vivid originality. The poverty of form, so striking to those who came to Christian art from the crowded figures of the reliefs of the later Roman Empire, is, Della Seta maintains, not necessarily a proof of artistic incapacity, but the result of conscious rejection of everything superfluous or unnecessary to ideas which seek expression in a direct and simple symbolism. This symbolic art, however, was too closely shadowed by the old Judaic horror of images to be capable of vital development. In order that Christian art might rise from this restricted sphere to accomplish its glorious destiny, it was first to sink to a lower plane, where attention became once more focussed on the Divinity as the source of protection for both present and future. Thus later mosaics as well as much cathedral sculpture have a theurgic or, as Della Seta calls it, an iconolatrous purpose.‡ Throughout the Middle Ages up to the revival of art under Giotto, the divine image is placed, as in primitive art, in direct relation to the

* F. Cumont, *The Mysteries of Mithras* (Eng. trans. by McCormack), (p. 188 ff.).

† Hippolyte Delahaye, *Légendes Hagiographiques*, p. 187 f.; *Les Origines du Culte des Martyrs*, p. 467; cf. "Castor et Pollux dans les légendes hagiographiques," in *Analecta Bollandiana*, vol. xxiii., 1904.

‡ Here again many, like Professor Marucchi in his otherwise sympathetic review of Della Seta's book (*Nuovo Bullettino di Archeologia Cristiana*, xvii., p. 253 f.), may object to the word "iconolatrous" as applied to any image of Christian worship, the images, according to Catholic dogma, having always remained merely symbolic.

worshipper, and is unconcerned with the attendant figures within picture or relief. The emancipation in this case, as in that of Greece, is brought about under the quickening of the historic spirit, and Dante plays in the formation of the new ideals of Christian art, but on a grander scale, the part assigned to Homer for the art of Greece. Once more art becomes narrative and is devoted to exhibiting the nature of the Divinity as manifest in His dealings with man in the past; even so great a scene as that of the Last Judgment, which, if any, might appear concerned with the future, is conceived as peopled, in Dantesque fashion, with figures taken from history. The infiltration of Greek ideas helps the regeneration of art, but the limited aims of classical antiquity were soon to be outstripped. Under the influence of Christianity art was increasingly called upon to concentrate its efforts on the rendering of the spiritual and moral side of human nature, hence even the efforts of Praxiteles and of Skopas appear as mere child's play when compared to what was attained by the high Renaissance in facial expressiveness. But this effort after expressiveness tends in its turn to over-emphasize the human element, till in the seventeenth century art finally drops its connection with religion; but with this divorce figured art loses its primary source of inspiration, and the only vital art forms left to us in modern times are portraiture and landscape. Such in brief, and with much that is of the first importance necessarily omitted, is the outline of the synthesis which, under the semblance of a history of art, is in reality a profound philosophy of art in its relation both to history and religion.

II

In the country which has produced Andrew Lang and Robertson Smith, Tylor, Frazer, and Farnell, and where the works of Reinach, of Yrjö Hirn and of Cumont probably find their largest public, the attempt of Della Seta to

reconcile the study of religion with that of art is certain to command attention. The book re-establishes to my mind the balance between the exclusively formal study of art initiated in Germany and the interpretative methods introduced under the auspices of comparative mythology. Della Seta's book further marks a reaction from the once potent doctrine of *Kunstwollen*, which represents plastic form from its earliest beginnings as the result of an inherent impulse towards artistic creation, as though the cave-dwellers of Altamira had broken the tedium of long winter evenings by producing, out of their love of art, animal paintings à la Paul Potter. No such weighty pronouncement on the connection between art and religion as this of Della Seta's has appeared of late years, if we except the masterly article on Greek Religion contributed to Hastings's Encyclopædia, in which Dr. Farnell formulated the direct and vital influence of Greek religion upon Greek art. Della Seta differs, as we have seen, from most writers on the beginnings of art in that he is not unmindful of its high destinies. By a fortunate coincidence the translation of his book appears only a few months after Dr. Spearing's *Childhood of Art*, where many of the same problems are discussed, though Dr. Spearing leaves off with the Greeks. Both writers are alike animated with the desire to penetrate primary causes, but neither of them remains confined within the magic circle of origins. As Dr. Spearing well puts it, "Art and literature may have had their origin in poor or mean desires, but their true function is to ennoble the desires that gave them birth, and to lead the world to the perception of still higher things." Were this the place for criticism, one might perhaps venture to regret that Della Seta links "the perception of these higher things" too exclusively with what he calls *arte esemplificativa*, with the reflective or contemplative art born of the mythopœic spirit. Yet parallelism or frontality—the solemn structural quality which placed the Divinity in direct relation to the worshipper, produced statuary form of matchless strength

and beauty. May not the informing spirit of this theurgic phase, cleansed of all magic and superstitious intention, shine forth again under the auspices of knowledge—and lead to new and as yet unexplored heights of artistic expression?

III

Be these things as they may—and I feel bound to indicate other points of view, not discordant but complementary—we must admire the soundness of Della Seta's main thesis, the delicacy and breadth of his insight, the vigorous exactitude of his reasoning; it is the whole outlook of archæological study which is vivified by the principles he has discovered at the root of artistic expression. In his recent inaugural address on his appointment to the Chair of Archæology at the University of Genoa,* he himself traced the rise of the archæological spirit to the Greeks, and argued in the spirit of his book that the archæological temperament was necessarily alien to peoples who, like certain Oriental races, were solely preoccupied in their vast industrial and artistic production with utilitarian and magical ends, and thereby unconsciously held back mankind from the search into the secret of its own concatenation with the past. With the birth of the historic spirit due to Greece the outlook changes, and archæology and history become the great factors which enhance man's sense of life *by prolonging it upwards into the past.* In Della Seta's reiterated assertion that the absence of the historic sense is the mark of untutored races, futurist doctrine finds its severest condemnation.

The book is that of a young and ardent spirit; it also strikes one as that of a mature thinker. Inspired by the example of Winckelmann, who searched out and published monument after monument, till he felt ready to build up his mighty history of the antique, Della Seta has shown by pre-

* "L'Archeologia dai Greci a Winckelmann e a noi," published in *Nuova Antologia*, February 1, 1913.

liminary studies his competence to deal with the minutest problems of archæology. As a philologer of the first order we find him writing on the Homeric question;* as a classical archæologist he has published many of the most important monuments discovered in Rome of late years;† as the collaborator of Professor Colini in the reorganization of the Museum in the Villa Giulia he has rearranged on a comprehensive basis the protohistoric finds from the Tomba Barberini at Palestrina‡ and the matchless collection of terra-cottas from the temples and other sites of ancient Latium. Above all must we bear in mind that in a monograph published as far back as 1907, under the title of *La Genesi dello scorcio nell' arte greca*, Della Seta laid the foundations of the present book. In the earlier work he, as a worthy pupil of Emmanuel Loewy, examined the causes which led the Greeks to the discovery of foreshortening and thereby to emancipation from the rigid parallelism § of primitive art.

At a time when every effort is being made to restore the intellectual alliance between England and Italy (now, as ever, *la mère savante de toute Renaissance*), this book should

* His earliest publication was, I believe, an essay on evolution in epic poetry published in the *Rivista d'Italia*, 1902. A paper entitled "Achaioi, Argeioi, Danaoi nei poemi omerici" was published in *Rendiconti della R. Accademia dei Lincei*, 1907. I may also note here his paper on the Sphinx of Hagia Triada (*Rendiconti della R. Accademia dei Lincei*, 1907), and two papers on the Shell and the Disc of Phaistos (ibid., 1908 and 1909); an article, Ἐξ ὑποβολῆς and ἐξ ὑπολήψεως, was contributed to the *Saggi di storia e d'Archeologia offerti a G. Beloch*, 1910.

† Thus he published the fine archaic Greek statue of the Villa Borghese (*Bullettino della Commissione Archeologica Comunale*, 1908); the Niobid from the Sallustian Gardens (*Ausonia*, 1907); a statue of Heracles in the Malatesta Collection (*Vita d' Arte*, 1910); the group of "Nysa and the Child Dionysos" in the Lante Collection (*Vita d' Arte*, 1908).

‡ Della Seta has laid the basis for all future study of these finds in an article of the *Bollettino d' Arte* for 1909 ("La Collezione Barberini d' Antichità prenestine").

§ Della Seta's "parallelism" is equivalent to the "frontality" of Julius Lange, and to the "unidimensionality" of Loewy.

be welcome as affording the proof of the vitality and promise of Italian scholarship. Coming so soon after Benedetto Croce's *Estetica* (likewise before the English public),* it shows that in the field of constructive criticism, as before in that of creative art, Italy is destined to hold high rank among the nations of Europe.

The English edition is enriched by additional chapters on architecture; but owing to my departure for America I was unable to see either these or any of the translation of the book. I have to thank Dr. Farnell for kindly correcting the proofs of this Preface during my absence from Europe.

EUGÉNIE STRONG.

January, 1914.

* *Aesthetic, a Science of Expression and General Linguistic*, translated from the Italian of Benedetto Croce by Douglas Ainslie. London: Macmillan & Co., 1909.

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INTRODUCTION *

The relation between religious ideas and the works of plastic art inspired by them vary considerably. The power which a people of low culture attributes to its idols is very different from that recognized by modern civilization in a Christian image. The idol serves to protect its possessor in the present and the future, it is endued with a constant and renewable magic power; the Christian image records a past action of the Divinity and has only the force of example.

The passage from one extreme to the other marks a radical change of value in the work of plastic art. Art had arisen with a magical scope, to act, by means of her productions, upon nature and, whether by compulsion or persuasion, upon the superior beings who held dominion over nature. She renounced this object to aim at one substantially different—that of placing the Divinity in the beauty of His form or in the nobility of His works before the eyes of the believer, substituting action on the spectator for action on external nature, visible or invisible. In this change is summed up and revealed in concrete fact all the progress of the human soul rising from timid primeval religious ideas to the high moral teaching of historic religions.

I intend to pursue the track of this conquest and follow

* This book is derived from a course of lectures on archæology and the history of art given by me at the University of Rome in 1908–9. In order to preserve the original expository character of the work bibliographic notes are reduced to a minimum, so that the evidence of research may seem to have been suppressed. This was done, however, in the interests of the reader, in order to give him a complete idea of the links which unite religion and art rather than a learned discourse on separate facts.

it along two branches—that of art intended for the needs of life and art intended for the needs of death—terrestrial art and funeral art.

In this study it will be possible to distinguish the links which bind religious concept to the image in the field of religions so different as the animism and elementary theism of uncivilized peoples up to the elevated doctrines of Buddhism and Christianity. This variety of relation will explain the different aspect of each art, for characteristic of form and choice of subject, rise, arrest, or decadence, are in great part the result of the position which art has had to assume with regard to the religious idea. Thus also light will be thrown upon both the rigid traditionalism of Egyptian art and the progressive idealism of Christian art.

In the second place, we shall be able in the same field to comprehend the greatness of Greek civilization and Greek art, for this transformation in the character of the work of plastic art, this gradual loss of magic power, is due to Greek art. Buddhist art and Christian art have advanced farther in the same direction only because they have reaped the fruits of her conquest. The world of myth which was the chief fount of inspiration for Greek plastic art, and which is regarded by the superficial observer as the fanciful and unsubstantial fruit of a vivacious spirit, will then appear in its just value as that which has prepared the way amongst human kind for the religions of history, which, besides fixing the past actions of the gods, would influence man by their example.

But beyond the special problems proposed in this work I hope to make clear the high importance of plastic art in the origin, development and diffusion of religion. For, we note it once for all, religion enters more easily into the heart of uncultured man through the eyes than through the ears, much more by means of plastic art than by written tradition or oral communication. If we ask a man of the people what he thinks of the immortality of the soul and of the world beyond the tomb, we always find that his ideas are vague and confused,

if, indeed, he has any; but if we ask what is the god whom he worships like, the answer will be clear and exact: it will be the description of the sacred image most familiar to him—that on which his eyes have rested morning and night for years and years, that to which he has confessed his hopes and griefs, of whom he has asked help, and to whom he has promised rewards.

These are some aspects—and those amongst the most notable in the history of religions—which cannot be properly understood unless due attention is paid to plastic art. For instance, there has been much questioning as to how much of the doctrine of Greek philosophy has passed into the Christian religion, as to how far the *Phædo* of Plato has contributed to give form and substance to the doctrine of the immortality of the soul; there has been much discussion as to the Semitic and Græco-Roman dualism represented in the earliest times of the Church by the figures of S. Peter and S. Paul, and it has been said that Christianity grew from being a Semitic sect to a world-wide religion only because S. Paul, a Roman citizen, was able to purge it of all those complicated and often repugnant practices which formed the basis of the Judaism of that time. But plastic art, which forms the true and essential element of separation between the Hebrew religion and the Christian religion at its first origin has not been brought into the field as an argument to give weight to the evidence of the influence of Græco-Roman civilization.

Yet the first chapters of Christian art are a faithful mirror of the contrast between the two tendencies—Semitism with its aversion to images and paganism with its need of them, a subject of strife which agitated the earliest communities. The primitive symbolism, the appearance of certain biblical scenes with an allegorical value only, and then the complete triumph of an actual figuring of biblical facts and of the life of Christ show the end of this struggle and the ultimate victory of the pagan tendency. This victory is due to the force of Græco-

Roman plastic art, for, though it is true that neither the Divinity nor the saints have taken the form and outward appearance of the gods and heroes of the Greek Olympus—for the Semitic world and the Græco-Roman world had nothing in common in their inherited ideas, and therefore nothing in common in the conception of their higher beings—it is undeniable that from this struggle rose the spring of Christian art, and that this art owes its human and historic character to the religious art of the pagans. And in the history of the Christian religion there are other important facts from the struggle of the Iconoclasts to the Reformation which, openly or not, show the strong influence which plastic art has had upon her fate.

In the same way Buddhism, a religious conception which held in its doctrines elements in open discord with representation of figures by means of plastic art, has created this art for itself through contact with the Greek world, and the earliest monuments of Buddhism reveal in their tendency to symbolism that internal strife prevailed until the tendency to representation of figures obtained here also a complete victory. And if Buddhism has conquered the whole of Asia as Christianity conquered the whole of Europe, this is due to the fact that its missionaries, who took their way to Korea and China, as tradition tells us, set off armed not only with sacred books, but also with images and idols.

There is, then, a whole page in the history of the human soul which can be traced out on the basis of plastic art. And as form and scope are indivisible elements in a work of art and man only began to mould, carve, or trace forms after a fixed intention led him to do so, we shall find that, if beauty of form is the object aimed at by certain kinds of art during certain periods, the first and principal object of plastic art was the protection of man in life and in death, and that utility was aimed at before expression. No search need be made therefore for secondary causes, which up to a certain point consist of all the external conditions in the midst of which a work of art comes into being, but a

search for the fundamental cause, the inspiration which came to it from its destined scope, and an inquiry into the profound difference with which religious inspiration has acted on different peoples in different periods, may explain how from the rude drawings and idols of uncivilized races man has attained to the creations of Phidias and of Michelangelo.

RELIGION AND ART

I

RELIGION, MAGIC AND PLASTIC ART

Art inspired by religion—Magic—Art an instrument of magic—Suppression of the magic function in art.

All the numerous theories as to the origin of art have one weak point in common, that is, they are speculations of philosophers rather than the deductive and inductive conclusions of the historians of art based upon an extensive comparison of monuments.

Art inspired by Religion.

If, instead of formulating abstract theories, we take a comprehensive view of all the works of art that the spirit of man has produced from the dawn of civilization to the present day, in both uncultured and cultured communities and in the different strata of those communities, it will be found that there exists in every individual, and therefore in every people, either actively or in potentiality, the imitative faculty which may induce him in certain circumstances to reproduce in outline or substance natural objects or beings, that is, to produce drawings or statuary. But while the causes which may induce the creation of an image are as numerous as the needs of man, from ornament to a game, plastic art in the true sense of the word—that is, a collection of monuments connected with each other by affinity of style, not only of one individual, but of a whole people, a collection of monuments which is

the product of several generations—is only found when plastic art has been inspired by religion.

All the art of the human race is essentially religious art: from the Chaldæan to the Egyptian, from the Mycenæan to the Greek, from the Assyrian to the pre-Buddhistic Chinese, from the Mexican to the Peruvian, there is no exception. Even that characteristic art of the prehistoric period, the art of the reindeer epoch, which appears concerned only with a naturalistic reproduction of animal life, has, as has been shown, a magical character,* that is, it has been used in the service of a religious conception. And if during the historic period two new great schools of art have arisen—Buddhist art and Christian art—they have arisen only through the inspiration of new religions.

Acknowledging this religious foundation in all systems of art, we must recognize that this art may also have produced non-religious works, which corresponded with other needs of man's intelligence than his religious sentiment. But in the forms of art which seem to have been most affected by these non-religious needs, as with Greek art, the works which have absolutely no link, however slender, with religion constitute an absolute minimum.

Thus we find that some systems of art, such as Greek or Christian art after they had made progress, sought to humanize their religious works and bring them nearer to man in the reproduction of form and the expression of feeling. But when this religious inspiration was diminished the decadence of art set in. At the moment in which the human and the religious elements are in most exact equilibrium, so that the human element offers its most perfect terrestrial forms for the representation of the divinity, after a gradual process of improvement, from the features of the face to the limbs, from the limbs to the drapery, we have the culmination of art: in Greek art this period is from the fifth to the fourth century B.C.,

* S. Reinach, *Cultes, Mythes et Religions*, Paris, 1905, i. 125 ff.; *Orpheus*, Paris, 1909, p. 162 f.

the period from Phidias to Praxiteles; in Christian art it is in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries, from the time of Giotto to that of Michelangelo. At the moment when the equilibrium was disturbed through the overpowering of the religious element by the human, so that earthly forms stifled the divine element beneath the show of skilful work, there persisted for a time a triumph of art in its formal aspect, when immense efforts were made to compensate by external accentuation for the lack of inspiration: in Greek art this is shown in the earliest Hellenistic creations, in Christian art by the works of the seventeenth century. But this last triumph is inexorably followed by decadence, for religious art, beyond an exaggerated representation of what is human, has before it only rigidity and death: the late Hellenism and the modern period have marked the end both of Greek art and of Christian art. With this period of decadence there may exist, or it may be followed by, a passion, which we may term senile, for the work of the primitives; for an erudite and refined age is capable of being blind to clumsiness and awkwardness of form in its gasping admiration for that true inspiration which it is conscious of no longer possessing. But these phenomena of archaistic Greek art and of modern pre-Raphaelitism are the last sign that that art, as religious art, is dead for ever. It may follow with increased ardour the non-religious path of the historical painting, of genre, of landscape, or of portrait painting, it will probably seek for theological compensation in abstract personification and abstruse symbolism, but religious art it will never be again.

Art will then never arise and develop among men unless it has a foundation in religion. Art absolutely profane in origin, art born to satisfy the æsthetic taste of the spectator, art which seeks for expressiveness rather than for the material utility of its products, even if this be a spiritual utility, is inconceivable in human history and has absolutely never existed.

Religion and Art

If there have been peoples who, for whatever reason, have never possessed religious art—as, for example, the Hebrew nation, who were forbidden to make representations of the Deity—these peoples have possessed absolutely no plastic art.

And when a people like the Phœnicians, who had no religious art of their own, wanted for economic reasons to produce art for the purposes of commerce on the shores of the Mediterranean, they were unable to create such an art for themselves, so raked up a mixed collection of subjects from the art of their neighbours, Egyptian, Mycenæan, or Assyrian. In Persia, too, where the less severe rule of Islam permitted the use of images, art became a tributary to Buddhist art, either by the direct road from India or by the return road from China.

If, however, plastic art forms an important part of civilization, the sublimity of a religion cannot be measured by the plastic art to which it gave life. There are some religions, such as that of Egypt, which, while possessing only slight moral value, have produced, as it were, an orgy of art; and others, such as the Hebrew religion, which possess a high moral standard, have closed the way to any plastic representation whatever. We shall see presently that an excess of art production may indicate a somewhat materialistic conception of religion, and that the forbidding of any image may be an indication of spirituality. It is true also that there were nations such as the Roman (Plut., *Numa*, 8), the Celtic, the Germanic (Tac., *Germ.*, 9), who rose to a high level of civilization yet were still without any form of religious art,* and obtained it only through the inspiration of another art and another religion.

Having acknowledged religion as the chief inspiration of plastic art so long as the latter is not simply the external element necessary to every religion, we must see in what

* S. Reinach, *Cultes, Mythes et Religions*, i. 146 f.; *Orpheus*, pp. 147, 165 f., 192 ff.

manner their relation arises and is established. How can religion induce a man to reproduce by line or solid things or beings? To understand this we must take into consideration the feelings and ideas aroused in man by contact with the phenomena of nature. Uncivilized man sees himself surrounded by useful or harmful animals who move, eat, and sleep like himself, and to which he must therefore attribute a life and soul such as he feels in himself. Further, he sees himself surrounded by natural phenomena, the course of the sun, lunar rotations, thunder, wind, or rain, which he does not explain to himself, but which, as they apparently consist in motion similar to that which characterizes animal life, are regarded by him as things having life and spirit. Uncultured man is thus brought to an animistic conception of the universe, and is inclined to attribute a spirit even to the objects which are not endued with motion —to everything, in fact, which surrounds him, so long as it presents itself to him with the characteristic of individuality.

Magic.

But at the same time man forms a theistic conception, through which he considers things, beings, the phenomena of nature, not as endued with a spirit and will of their own, but as guided and dominated by higher beings. These beings are imagined as possessing human or animal form, or else they have floated in the fancy of the believer in a vague extra-human or superhuman appearance. And from an elementary polytheism the human mind has, by various stages, risen to a monotheistic idea—that is, the idea of one single omnipotent being holding complete dominion over the universe.

At whichever of these conceptions a people may have arrived, common to them all is the desire to explain the reason of the capacity for action of objects or beings. And as man measures the worth of all that surrounds him by the benefit or the harm which he receives therefrom, there has naturally arisen in his mind, with the animistic or theistic idea, the idea

of assuring to himself the dominion over all these wills which populate the universe. In the animistic conception he considers the things, phenomena, or beings which surround him as so many separate wills; he has seen the necessity of bending to his own benefit the beneficent wills and of neutralizing the evil wills—that is, he has proposed to himself to exercise upon these wills his own will for attraction or repulsion, in fact, to perform direct magic. In the theistic conception, on the other hand, knowing that he cannot directly impose his own will, because the dominion of the universe is in the hands of higher beings, he seeks to exercise upon these higher beings the magical attraction which he is conscious of not being able to use directly over nature. It is impossible to imagine the Divinity without thinking of His power of action, and therefore of a human action intended to guide the action of the Divinity. Man rises to the conception of God because he feels the need for His power; he creates for himself a religion—that is, a cult and rites—because he wants to set that power in action.

And the means of action in every religion, even in those which seem the most elevated, is magic; it may be a spiritual magic instead of material, a magic which instead of constraining implores, but it is always a case of an individual bending to his own advantage all that is beneficial in his surroundings and hindering all that may injure him. The uncultured people that performs magic functions to make the rain fall or to keep off some misfortune, and the cultured people that prays to the Deity with a similar object, perform work not greatly differing in quality: though the one acts directly, the other indirectly; the one constrains, the other causes to constrain; one thinks he is strong, the other knows he is weak; the one commands and the other implores.

It is very true, too, that even in the theistic conception the invocation is often in reality a masked command, and it is not uncommon at the present day to see uncultured people of the lower orders pass from prayer to threat, and

even to violence against a sacred image, when the latter seems tardy in granting the request made. Similarly, when modern magicians exercise their art in the midst of a society of advanced culture, they often do not perform their magic functions directly upon beings and things, but under the influence of the theistic idea they turn to the spirits on whom those beings or things depend, and, for the most part, flatter and invoke rather than constrain them; that is, they work in the same way as the official religion, though upon spirits not recognized by the latter but usurping its authority.

Magic, therefore (on this point I depart from the prevailing opinion), is not in itself a conception of the universe which has preceded the religious conception * or a means of action necessary only in the animistic stage,† but is the means used in every religious conception to induce nature, or the beings which preside over nature, to fulfil those actions of which man has need. Only it assumes different forms and degrees according to whether it is used in the service of an animistic conception or of a theistic conception. In the first case it is constrained to multiply itself in continuous functions: every object, phenomenon, or being in nature representing an inimical force to be overcome or a friendly force to be attracted, the magic power expends its energy in a thousand battles; in the second case, on the contrary, it has only to ingratiate itself with certain good spirits and defend itself against certain evil spirits, and can therefore concentrate its force in a more restricted and more intense struggle. But in the one and in the other case it is a question of fighting—fighting to attract and to repel.

Thus magic at the origin forms the fulcrum of every religion, and remains latent as a sediment in the minds of the less cultured believers even in the highest forms of religion. It is,

* J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (third edition), London, 1911, i. 233 ff.

† S. Reinach, *Cultes, Mythes et Religions*, ii. xv ; *Orpheus*, p. 32 f.

in fact, preserved, under the form of invocation, among the means made use of in every religion. Even when man has risen to the conception of a perfectly good and just God, whose conduct will therefore not be subject to the will of man, prayer, that request for help which might seem irreverent when addressed to one who has no need for such appeal, shows its magical character and its primeval origin—the persuasion inherent in the mind of man that the higher beings on whom he depends will not work unless he induces them to action.

Art an Instrument of Magic.

The religious idea, then, is but a utilitarian conception of the universe, and magic embraces the whole of the wide field of the means by which useful benefits may be attained. These means are countless: from the simple thought to the expressed word, from the mimetic movements of one's own body to actions done upon others, all may be, if the intention is present, instruments of magic. Man who wishes ill to his enemy can wish him ill by merely thinking it, or can express the wish in an imprecation; he can reproduce by a mimetic action of his own person, or can carry out upon objects or other beings, ceremonies which tend to the same end, for the indispensable element in a magical function is the will to succeed in the intent.

But plastic art by its very character, by its capacity for reproducing in its formal aspect all that exists in nature, offers, more than any other field of intellectual activity, prime material for the practice of magic.

If under an animistic conception one would bring good or harm on some person, magic would be able to compass this intent if possession were obtained of a small portion of his body, such as hair, nails, or teeth, or of his clothing, and an incantation by action or speech were performed over this. But success in such a case would be still more to be relied on if the incantation could be performed not only on these small particles but upon a figure which should contain them, and should nearly resemble

the person in question. The figure is all the more necessary when the personal elements are not there, and then the resemblance of this image to the individual to be benefited or harmed is the only guarantee that the magic spell will be successful. Numerous examples of these elementary figures produced for magical purposes are found among modern peoples of low culture,* but evident traces are met with also in the life of ancient civilized nations, and remarkable instances are known in the lowest strata of modern communities. The comic satire of Horace (I, viii) relates how a Priapus by a nasty joke put to flight Canidia and Sagana, who were performing incantations by means of two figures of wool and wax. Priapus had certainly not much reason to laugh at the two old witches, for he had been placed in the field for a magical purpose—that of frightening away thieves! And who does not know that similar practices are daily carried on by credulous persons with similar figures to bring harm on an enemy or to obtain the love of an indifferent person? Dante immortalized the witches of this type in the *Inferno* (xx, 121, ss.)—

> "Vedi le triste che lasciaron l' ago,
> La spola e il fuso, e fecersi indovine;
> Fecer malie con erbe e con imago."

And in the animistic conception, as in every other religious system, not only the needs of life are the subject of magic practices in connection with plastic art, but also those of death. To supply the spirit of the dead with the things he may need in the life beyond, as he had needed them in this life, was most easily managed by working magic upon figures representing in material form the object of these needs.

In the work of plastic art intended to serve for magical use under an animistic conception both for the needs of life and the needs of death we must point out two chief characteristics.

* J. G. Frazer, *op. cit.*, i. 55 ff.

One is their utilitarianism. The work was not created from a desire to reproduce the surrounding world with an æsthetic intention, but solely for use. It is a different kind of usefulness from that served by the same persons when they made an arrow-point or spearhead; it was a spiritual kind of utility, but it appeared to them not less necessary than the material utility of the weapons. If, in fact, they believed that by magic practices carried out by means of figures they could obtain good hunting or good fishing, or could overcome their private adversary or public enemy, these figures would seem to them not less useful than the weapons they would use in the real act.

The second important characteristic of the work of art made with magical intent is its temporariness. It is not created to recall a past deed, but to act in the present and the future. Human life, in fact, in all its branches rises and takes its way occupied by the thought of making safe the present and the future; only when this side of the horizon is seen to be safe does it turn to contemplate the past or compose its history.

Even under a theistic conception, magic makes use of plastic art. When man for his own benefit proposes to perform magical practices upon the higher beings who hold dominion over nature, plastic art comes largely to his assistance.

If there are higher beings or a higher being capable of regulating all the things in the universe, it is necessary to obtain their image in order to exercise more nearly upon them, by invocations and prayers or other functions, that masked violence which may induce them to turn to the benefit of the supplicant all that over which he holds sway. Here, then, is the origin of the idol, of the image, whether it be the small image which every one possesses for himself or a single image which protects the whole community.

The object of the making of an idol is not to be able to contemplate its features but to assure oneself of its protection. Some, indeed, may turn to the idol to thank it for benefits

received in the past, but it is kept with jealous care and honoured chiefly for what it can give now and in the future.

But besides these images another wide field of plastic art is displayed in religion. As under an animistic conception magical functions are performed by man upon objects, animals, or beings of the universe by means of their images, it is necessary under a theistic conception to dedicate to the divinity these figures, that they may be substituted for man in these functions. And from this arises that artistic production which we term the ex voto. The believer places in effigy under the direct action of the god those things and those beings which need his protection. He can dedicate his image if he requires this protection in a wide sense, or he can dedicate an image of a part of his person if it is diseased and he wishes it to be cured by the god, or in the same way he can dedicate images of the animals from whom he derives sustenance and for whom he desires protection and increase. By the dedication of these images he is sure of magically influencing the divinity so that the latter in his turn will act upon the real beings with compelling power. And if he wishes to ensure the unrestricted protection of the divinity for himself, for his family, and for his property, he has only to dedicate an image of the god himself, since this image will be at all times at his service exclusively. This is the point at which the image and ex voto meet, for the ex voto assumes the functions of the image.

Essentially characteristic of these products of plastic art is their utility and their destination to a present or future action. They appear, in fact, to be a necessary element for inducing the god to exercise his beneficial action : they are, as it were, a security for this action of the deity.

It is nevertheless true that besides the ex voto by means of which something is asked of the deity for the future, there is also something which is done as thanks for a past favour. But we must distinguish between the two cases : either the figure

dedicated by vow is the payment of a debt contracted mentally or verbally, and which was to be paid only after the favour had been obtained, or it is a gift which without previous promise is offered out of gratitude. In these two cases it seems as if the ex voto tends to lose its character of future destination to make room for a past element—recollection. But this is only apparent. As in the first case it mattered little whether the debt were paid at the moment of the vow or after the benefit was received, if the dedicator, possibly lacking confidence even in the gods, substituted for the confident formula: "I give, that thou mayest give," the doubtful form: "I will give when thou hast given"; the fact is that the divinity has been asked for his protection in the future. For the second case, that of the spontaneous votive gift, it must be allowed that the wish to record the past protection of the gods enters into the matter, but in substance the dedicators wish to ensure this protection for themselves for the future as well as the past. They know that if they had forgotten to make the gift they would have incurred the anger of the gods, so it did not signify if the vow were formulated: the ex voto is owed when once the gods have given their help. This ex voto is also essentially protective.

But if man could allow himself to be suspicious as to the beneficial power of the gods in what he expected from them during his life, and sometimes only paid his debt after the work was done, he had to have full confidence in their power in all connected with the destiny of man after death. There he had no control.

Under the theistic conception, when a man had once placed his whole life beneath the protection of the deity there was all the more reason to expect that this protection would be extended beyond this life, and in death when direct action was no longer possible. If the dead man needed to eat, drink, sleep, or move, and to do all this for a length of time which may be regarded as interminable, the deity only could help him.

In fact, it might be easy for the survivors to procure those natural things which he needed once or sometimes, but to provide for an infinite period was possible only to the omnipotence of the gods. But the work could be made easier to the gods, art could be brought in to help, by placing near the dead man the image of that which he needed, offering to the deity the means of transforming into the reality that which was only represented by an image. The gods in this case are asked to perform a magical action. And the field of this funerary art was not limited to the most urgent, material needs of the dead man, but was extended to the more or less complicated fate which destiny assigned to him in the other world: plastic representations might help him on his journey and bring him happiness in the world beyond. It is not possible in every case of funerary art to say how far the survivors who dedicated these images relied on the direct magic force of the images, and how far they considered the intervention of the gods necessary to explain this magic force: probably it was not clear even to the dedicators themselves. But what they doubtless did believe was that once these images were offered they would for ever supply the wants of the dead man.

If we consider as a whole all this religious art it will be seen that it rests on one single principle, that of imitative magic. Man believes that things which are outwardly similar are equally alike in internal construction and power of action. It is an art which originated in a mental illusion and from an erroneous application of the laws of causality.

Suppression of the Magic Function in Art.

Utility and future destiny are the essential characteristics found in the art which came into being for magical purposes in the service of animistic or theistic religion, either in the field of art intended for the protection of the individual in life or in that intended for his protection in death. What gods

and men did in the past does not affect this form of art. And some forms have stopped at this stage—great systems of art like that of Egypt, whose monuments are counted by tens of thousands.

But an art arose which turned its face from the future to the past, and instead of works of utility rather created works of beauty, which were to be preserved by time for the joy of all—an art which cast off the magic cloak which weighed it down and found interest, not in that which the gods promised to men in the future, but in that which they had done in the past; which cared not for the future of men beyond this earth, but for the actions done by them in life, and therefore shows different content from all earlier forms of art. This was Greek art. Two other forms of art, the Buddhist and the Christian, inherited what Greek art had attained to, and have in many cases carried its principles even further.

By first considering systematically the art of uncultured peoples, ancient and modern, and then following in historical sequence the variations of art among the Egyptians, Chaldæo-Assyrians, Mycenæans, Greeks, Etruscans, Romans, Buddhists, and Christians, we shall understand the gradual evolution which has reduced and cancelled the magical character of art. We shall omit the religions and art of Peru and Mexico, because they have been arrested at the magical stage, and though they may have reached great perfection of form, their ideas remain those of an uncultured people. On the other hand, by studying the history of the religion and art of the three civilized continents of the ancient world, where they are in direct contact with the Mediterranean, we shall see how human society advanced beyond these ideas.

We must not, however, forget that different degrees of culture are found in different strata of the same society, and that the people of the lower strata have often the same needs and ideas as the people whom we term

uncivilized. We shall therefore see that while the higher grades of society gradually discard the magical characteristics of art, the lower classes remain tenaciously attached to them, and thus preserve contemporaneous testimony of events which have happened successively. While Greek art, for example, in the fifth century had created for the divinity a glittering aureole of myth, the peasants still put up their votive tablets in the popular sanctuaries dedicated to the deities of health and prosperity, to ensure the future protection of the god. While in the fourth and third centuries skilled Greek artists came to decorate the temples of Etruria with terra cotta statues representing mythical subjects, more humble artists continued to produce for the crowd roughly made images of parts of the human body that the gods might be induced to cure the real ones. And during the whole period of the development of Christian art, while sculptors and painters with most perfect mastery of form perpetuated pious legends, the faithful believers paid their most devout worship to the rough images held by tradition to be miraculous, because to these images was attributed a magic power which the others did not possess. Art interests the people not by its beauty but by its utility, and it is natural that this should be, for when a religious image is admired for the perfection of its form, religion is absent or is only an accessory.

There are, in fact, two rocks between which flows the stream of religious art. One where the image of the divinity is honoured for its magic power, capable of exercising a compelling force over nature, and therefore identified with the divinity himself; the other where the image of the divinity is admired for its beauty, and is therefore regarded as a purely human creation that can in no sense be an intermediary between God and man. The lower classes of society strike on the first rock the higher classes on the second, as we may still see daily.

It is easy to understand that a people that has reached

a spiritual conception of the divinity would see how its artistic representation, and in general any application of plastic art to religion, would tend to materialize it either in a magical or æsthetic sense, and would therefore forbid the use of any image or would allow the representation of the deity by symbols only. We shall see in the history of Mediterranean civilization that this tendency is represented especially by the Semitic race, that it characterized the art of the Chaldæans and Assyrians, that it deprived the Hebrews and Mahomedans of any plastic art whatever, that it directed the course of primitive Christian art, suggesting certain symbolical forms, that it supplied the spark to the fury of the Iconoclasts and had no small share in the Reformation.

When we consider that from its original magical function art has advanced to the creation of a Greek statue or a Christian painting, turbid though the springs of art may seem, we must admire the victory of the human spirit over fear and ignorance as shown in the effacement of the magical character of religious images and the establishment of their purely æsthetic value.

II

ART OF UNCIVILIZED PEOPLES

Animism and theism—Totemism—Magic art—Form in magic art—Magic character of literature, music and dancing—Lack of historic sense in uncivilized peoples.

The religious ideas of modern uncivilized peoples certainly appear to reflect the ideas which primitive men must have had of the phenomena of the universe. But these ideas have changed with time, and in many cases may have followed a different path from that of the dispensations of civilized nations—that is, they may have experienced involution instead of evolution, may have stopped and turned back instead of going forward.

Animism and Theism.

Whether, at the moment when the human race turned its attention to the problem of the universe, all its groups held the same animistic or theistic idea—that is, whether they believed that everything had a soul of its own and independent power of action, or that all things were put in motion by a superior being or beings outside them, we cannot now say, nor can we decide when that moment was. The two conceptions probably arose contemporaneously in the case of different things and beings in the minds of men, and then the different human groups, influenced by the different material and spiritual conditions in which they had to live, favoured one or other idea till it became predominant.

It is natural that these two ideas should have presented themselves to mankind at the same time, for if the animistic idea

appears spontaneously in the case of all living beings and of some natural phenomena connected with motion, the theistic idea—that of the intervention of a superior being or beings—presents itself with equal probability in the case of other phenomena and of inanimate objects which are put in action only at certain times and in certain conditions. And if the external appearance of the phenomena made the animistic theory seem more probable, the theistic idea was suggested to man by the examination of his own life, the dissection of his own animism. He must have perceived that some of his actions, and above all, dreams and death, were independent of his will and must therefore be determined by outside forces. In some cases he would recognize these forces in beings and objects of surrounding nature, and would therefore fall back upon the animistic theory; in other cases he may have been unable to identify these forces with natural beings and things, and he would therefore be inclined to the theistic idea.

We may add that the animistic idea itself being based on dualism tends to a kind of theism. If we attribute a soul—that is, something individual and separable—to all beings and things that surround us, the idea rises spontaneously that this soul may on occasion leave the being or thing in which it dwells. The appearance in a dream of persons living at a distance may be considered a proof of this. And this separation must have seemed necessary on the death of these beings. Then among all these spirits who populate the universe primitive man is led to imagine the same relation of subjection and dominion that exists between real beings, and when one of these spirits is recognized as possessing a superior force or authority by which he can constrain others to submit to his will, we are already on the way to theism. Indeed, one of the paths which led us to the theistic idea must have been the cult of the dead and the worship of ancestors, to whom the same authority was attributed in the after-life as they had possessed in their life on earth.

This contemporaneous origin of the two theories, the

animistic and the theistic, seems proved by the fact that there is no human race entirely dominated by one idea. It is a question of measuring the proportion in which one idea or the other prevails in the different social strata, but there is no uncivilized race which in its general animism does not in some small degree hold the theistic idea, if only in the cult of the heroic or deified dead, and there is no cultured people, even of those who have risen to the heights of monotheism, which does not retain some remnant of animism.

In any case, if the two ideas appeared contemporaneously, the prevalence of animism marks a low grade of civilization, while that of theism indicates advance to a higher form of culture. As, in fact, man judges of the value of things and beings by the good or ill which he receives from them, he will under an animistic dispensation feel himself at the mercy of a number of forces working separately against him, and therefore that he is feeble before so many adversaries. Under a theistic dispensation, on the contrary, he knows that all things are in subjection to a superior being or beings, and that to live in safety he has only to gain the favour of these beings, for when he has obtained this he can feel himself master of the universe.

Theism in comparison with animism represents a smaller expenditure of human energy, and as this energy can be turned to other conquests over nature, it is easy to understand why theistic races possess the higher civilization.

Now what are the consequences of a specially animistic dispensation? As man perceives that some beings and things bring him advantage and that others bring him harm, it becomes necessary to favour the work of the former and hinder that of the others. It would seem as if the result would be the preservation of the one part and the destruction of the other. But man often has not the means of destroying what has brought him harm, and so he can only ingratiate himself with it, and protect that which is harmful in the hope that in its turn it will give him protection. Man thus estab-

Totemism.

lishes relations with things and beings around him—relations which are understood to be accepted by the other side as far as these are spirits. Afterwards man can more or less disregard or consider superfluous some of these relations and keep to those from which he expects greater benefit or fears greater harm.

This is the stage represented in animism by the so-called "Totemism." * Totemism is a relation for reciprocal protection established by a group of men, a clan, between its members and the animals of a determined species, or a genus of plants, or a particular order of natural phenomena. This human group protects the "totem," and in its turn expects protection from it. We must note also that the form of totemism which we find now among uncivilized peoples is, like all those forms of religion which have not had the force to progress, a backward and conventionalized form of totemism. The protective function is no longer in evidence when the totem, as frequently happens, has become a part of an animal or plant from which man can expect neither benefit nor injury. Through the subdivision of a tribe, or for other reasons not evident to us, there has been, in place of the protecting and protected animal, a substitution with symbolical significance of a part of this animal, and once this symbolic value in totemism has been established, other clans may have chosen as their totem other things or parts of beings whose protective capacity seems to us no less doubtful. The members of the clan, then, see in the totem the visible sign of a hidden protective force which will have power in all the vicissitudes of life, not a single protective relation between the totem and themselves. The totem then becomes in reality a "mark," a "sign," and agrees in substance with the meaning of the word, which is taken from the language of a North American tribe.

This form of totemism, which as totemism has been involved and conventionalized, marks, on the other hand, a movement towards theism, since it recognizes the existence of a protecting

* S. Reinach, *Cultes, Mythes et Religions*, i. 9 ff.

force which acts upon the universe and has in the totem a symbolic sign only, the totem having lost its individuality. But if totemism, as it now appears among uncivilized peoples, is a transformation, however slowly effected, of the original totemism, with a tendency to attribute theistic value to the force represented by the totem, totemism must have been originally one of the many forms assumed by animism.

It is therefore a mistake to try to reduce all religions, even those which have gone through the highest form of evolution, to the least common denominator of totemism, and to try to discover traces of totemism in every religion in which theriomorphic deities or anthropomorphic divinities with sacred animals are found. A form of evolution by which the animal totem—animals supply the greater number of the totems—should become the theriomorphic divinity, and from the theriomorphic divinity pass to the anthropomorphic divinity with a sacred animal, may be found among certain races, but the attempt to find it everywhere would entail a somewhat ingenuous interpretation of the laws of evolution. In fact, once it is recognized that the animistic and the theistic conceptions arose spontaneously in the human mind, and that only for reasons peculiar to each group of men has the one or other idea prevailed among them, it is possible that with totem animals there may have arisen contemporaneously theriomorphic and anthropomorphic gods, and that only for particular causes the one or the other may have gained predominant influence.

What is, however, common to all these three forms of religion is that man attributes to his totem (whether animal, plant, object, or phenomenon), to the theriomorphic and to the anthropomorphic deity the power of doing good or harm and of using this power for his benefit or injury. Hence the necessity of directing this beneficent or maleficent action, of imposing upon the totem—upon the theriomorphic or anthropomorphic deity—one's own will, to work magic upon them.

Magic Art.

This compulsion may be exercised by any of the means possessed by man, but one of the most efficacious means is that of the material image. Since man cannot work a magic spell directly upon the totem or divinity, he works it upon its image as far as he can identify it with an image.

We find, therefore, amongst the various uncivilized peoples examples of totem,* of theriomorphic divinity, of anthropomorphic divinity. And we cannot say that the most advanced stage necessarily implies the existence of the preceding stages, or that to arrive at the god-man it was necessary to pass through the stages of the totem and of the god with animal features.

The common characteristic of all these figures is their protective or utilitarian power. They were made in order that upon them the magic spell could be worked, and that this could be done both now and in the future: they are therefore figures without a past and gifted only for the future.

But man can not only work his will upon the totem and upon the protecting god; he can work it upon every thing and every being whose evil influence he wishes to neutralize or whose good actions he wishes to turn to his own advantage.

Above all, he requires to provide food for himself, and this in a low state of civilization is furnished by hunting and fishing. Man knows from experience that game is not always equally abundant: hence the necessity of using magic to ensure a plentiful supply of food.† He can, under the animistic theory, act directly upon the animals, attracting them to himself, or he can, under a theistic dispensation, act upon the god or gods to whom the animals are in subjection, to induce him to send them to him. Some peoples therefore draw figures of fish upon the sand of the shore, or carve figures of wild animals upon the trunks of trees in the place where they are going to hunt, while others take with them into the field images of the gods

* E. Grosse, *Die Anfänge der Kunst*, Freiburg-Leipzig, 1894, p. 132 ff.

† J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, i. 108 ff.

of hunting or fishing, to induce them at an opportune moment to send them a good supply.

When he has provided himself with food man has many other battles with nature. Innumerable ills of body and mind may affect him, and here also art offers the means for effecting a cure. Under the animistic theory the patient is acted upon directly; under the theistic dispensation indirectly through the gods. Thus among some peoples figures are made to represent sick people, and curative treatment is applied to the figures that the treatment may through sympathy react upon the real patient. Others seek to strike or placate the evil spirits who cause illnesses by acting upon their images, or help the sick folk by obtaining for them by means of images the protection of the gods or generally of the good spirits who put evil to flight.

The magical practices in which the use of images is a necessary element in the cure of disease are many and various. Shamanism, that form of medical treatment based on magic which is met with among many uncivilized peoples, and was, at the beginning of civilization, the mother of modern medicine, makes great use of images and the recipes of the witch-doctors—these shamans are often not prescriptions of purgatives or other decoctions, but of figures to be carved or drawn for the use of the patient. From the woman who is pregnant or in labour* and the new-born child who cries too loudly, through all the varieties of disease, slight or serious, which affect humanity, even to epilepsy or madness, plastic art may be called on for help.

Finally, man has not only to provide for his own needs and to keep off illness; he has also enemies to overcome. And whether these are enemies common to the whole nation or private enemies, art is ready to help him.† Under animistic ideas he will inflict on the image of his enemy all that he would like to inflict on the real person: he will stab it, burn

* J. G. Frazer, *op. cit.*, I, 70 ff. † Ibid., *op. cit.*, I, 55 ff.

it, cut it in pieces. Under a theistic dispensation the same result will be obtained by praying for it to the images of the god or gods: these images will thus facilitate the destruction of the enemy.

Besides those mentioned there are innumerable occasions in life in which savage man recurs to magic spells to ensure some benefit to himself or harm to others, and these magical practices are based on the productions of art. One of the most singular of these productions is the mask indispensable in religious dances, the use of which extends from America to Oceania, from Asia to Africa. And in all these productions we find the essential characteristics of magic art—utility and a future destination.

But beyond the needs of life man makes use of art also at the time of death. The ideas of man as to death are extraordinarily various, but there is no people who had or has the idea that death is a complete destruction of existence. For all men, in one way or another, the individual survives his death. If there were no other reason which led to this idea of survival the phenomenon of dreams, in which the dead appear as in their actual form, would be reason enough to induce men to believe that life in some form is continued after death. Not all people have developed this idea in the same way; all have not given the same weight to this survival; all men have not believed in a continuous future life, but for all men death is not the absolute end of life.

Now relations, friends and enemies must all pay their tribute to death. The relation in which they stood to one another on earth is continued after death: friends and relations will confer benefits, enemies will work harm. It is necessary to facilitate the action of the former and to impede the action of the latter.

But above all, as the same relations continue after death, the dead have the same needs as in life. The dead must eat, drink, and sleep, and the survivors must help them in this, as in their turn they will hope or expect the same help from

those who survive them. Here is a wide field for art; it becomes a substitute for reality. Various ideas are naturally reflected by art in different ways, but whether one wishes to ensure a supply of food for the dead man, to provide for his journey to a distant world and a safe position in that world, or if one desires the help of the dead friend or relation to impede the action of a dead enemy, in every case art can provide a useful image. And under animistic ideas these images will be used directly, but under theistic ideas recourse will be had to an image of the gods to whose protection the abode of the dead will be confided. The two essential characteristics of art, utility and a future destination, appear more clearly here in connection with the needs of the dead than in any art product connected with the needs of life.

Such is the picture which, with the help of details from the life of modern savages, we can draw of the origin of plastic art. These same peoples will probably have used figures in some cases for purposes apparently not connected with religion —perhaps for decorative purposes—but when these productions are examined it will be seen that this non-related art forms only the smallest part of their artistic production, or that, if apparently unconnected with religion, it is united by slender and invisible bonds to the religious idea.*

The art of purely geometric ornamentation too owes its existence chiefly to religion. The decorative patterns which savages tattoo or paint upon their bodies for religious ceremonies are an example of this. And there have been nations like the Chinese who, while possessing an advanced form of art, have preserved in the decoration of their ceremonial vases the ancient geometrical designs, because to these designs a certain degree of sanctity was attributed.

If such is the origin of plastic art amongst modern uncivilized peoples, the same may be presumed in the case of the uncivilized peoples of antiquity. But the material of this art is mostly

* Compare E. Grosse, *op. cit.*, p. 191 ff.

destructible: wood, straw, hide, or woven stuffs. Therefore a whole page of prehistoric art may have been effaced by time. Only when a prehistoric people made use of a durable material such as bone, stone, or clay has their art been preserved. We have an example of art of the reindeer period.* On the bones and horns of this animal we find engraved, or carved in relief or in the round, figures of the mammoth, bison, horse, stag, reindeer, and fish (Figs. 1–6). All these figures except the fish are found in large numbers painted on the walls of caves which were inhabited during the same period (Figs. 7–10). The naturalism of these figures at first gave the impression that this people had a passion for the art of figure drawing, an æsthetic exigency somewhat surprising in so low a state of civilization. But these figures are now more correctly considered as a production of magic art. In fact, while the human figure is extremely rare, a circumstance difficult to account for if this people only practised art through a passion for form, the figures represented are chiefly those of useful animals —those animals which supplied the necessities of life to the people, who probably hoped to increase their number in reality by multiplying their images on the implements they used and on the walls of their dwelling. This same custom is found among modern hunting and fishing tribes of low civilization.

That this elementary magic art marks the origin of figured art may be proved by analogous examples in the customs of the lowest strata of modern civilized communities. The people of these strata preserve, as a sediment, primitive ideas and customs. And thus while the higher classes enjoy the most refined forms of art, the lower classes commonly use images which are employed in witchcraft and magical practices. It is no longer a question of finding food by hunting and fishing, for the conditions of life are changed, and the necessities of

* E. Piette, *L'Art pendant l'Age du Renne*, Paris, 1907 ; E. Cartailhac et H. Breuil, *Peintures et Gravures murales des Cavernes paléolithiques*, Monaco, 1906.

FIG. 1.—MAMMOTH.

From Bruniquel. (British Museum.)

(*Piette*, pl. 5, n. 1.)

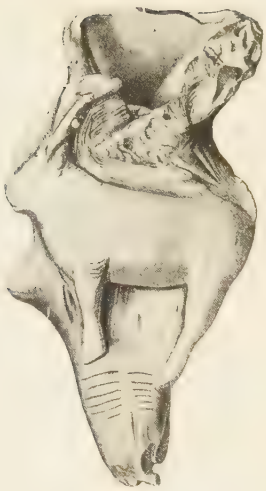

FIG. 2.—WILD GOAT.

From the Cave of Mas-d'Azil. (Coll. Piette.)

(*Piette*, pl. 50.)

FIG. 3.—HORSE.

From the Cave of Espélugues, near Lourdes. (Coll. Nelli.)

(*Piette*, pl. 12.)

FIG. 4.—HEADS OF STAG AND CHAMOIS.

From the Cave of Gourdan. (Coll. Piette.)

(*Piette*, pl. 84.)

[*See page* 58.]

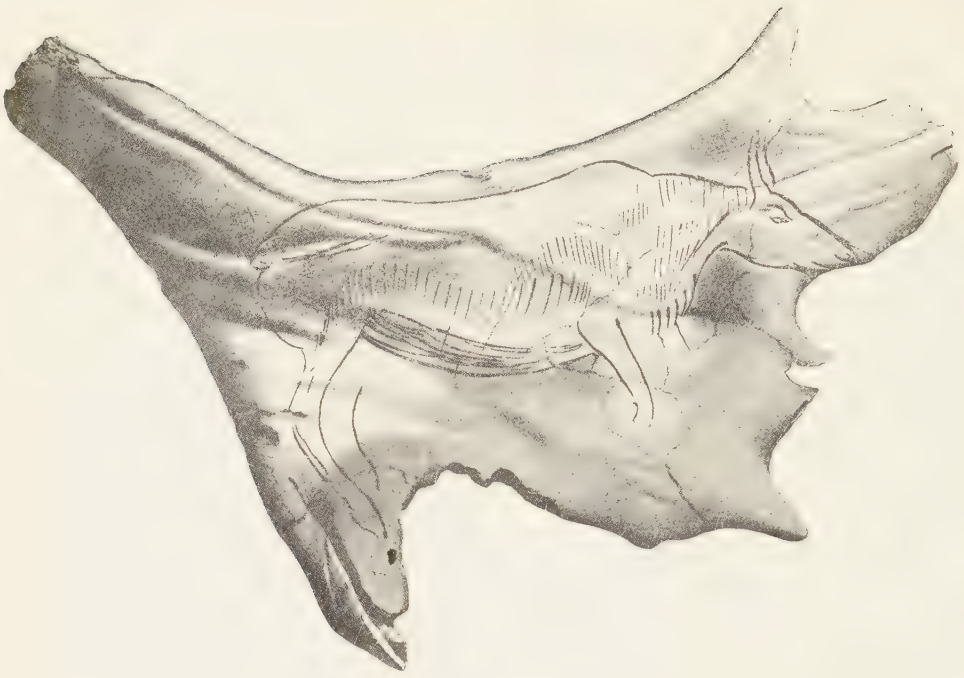

FIG. 5.—DEER.

From the Cave of Mas-d'Azil. (Coll. Ladevèze.)

(*Piette*, pl. 57.)

FIG. 6.—REINDEER AND SALMON.

From the Cave of Lorthet. (Coll. Piette.)

(*Piette*, pl. 40, n. 4.)

[*See page* 58.]

FIG. 7.—ANIMALS PAINTED ON THE ROOF.

Cave of Altamira.

(*Cartailhac-Breuil*, pl. 1.)

FIG. 8.—DEER AND SMALL BISON.

Cave of Altamira.

(*Cartailhac-Breuil*, pl. 13.)

[*See page* 58.]

FIG. 9.—WILD BOAR GALLOPING.

Cave of Altamira.

(*Cartailhac-Breuil*, pl. 15.)

FIG. 10.—BISON STOPPING.

Cave of Altamira.

(*Cartailhac-Breuil*, pl. 23.)

[*See page* 58.]

life are obtained in a different manner, but the people have recourse to magic in many other circumstances of life: for love unreciprocated, for difficult pregnancy, for an incurable illness, or to satisfy an implacable hatred, the lower classes turn to magic, and this magic is often based on plastic art. The examples found here scarcely differ from those of uncivilized man. Distance of space and time signifies little when men guided by the same idea turn to the same practices.

If we study the artistic attempts of children we find proof of the existence of the magic element in primitive art. It is generally said that a child draws or models whatever most strikes his fancy; I should say that he draws or models what most excites his desires. When the art of children is spontaneous, when it is not limited to copying from a model, it often is an expression of desire—is in fact magic art. Not that the child imagines that the figures which he produces can actually be transformed into the reality, but he persistently reproduces those figures which represent for him the reality most to be desired. Every man can refer to personal experiences of this kind, but a glance at the drawings of the children on all sides of us will detect the strength of this element of desire. It not only causes the little artists to prefer certain figures to certain others, but is responsible for the exaggerated proportions of certain parts of these figures. This explains why the figure of a soldier is one of the favourite subjects of a small boy, while that of a lady in full dress is preferred by his little sister; and also why in the former figure the sword and plume are exaggerated out of all proportion, while the buttons and the pipe are not forgotten, and why in the second figure the feathers in the hat are exaggerated and the fan and parasol not forgotten.

And the element of magic, of desire, is displayed not only in the art which the child himself produces, but also in his preference for certain playthings, that is, in the relation which he establishes with the productions of art which are supplied

to him in a completed state. Every one has noticed that children do not like mechanical toys—toys in which figures perform a certain action and that action only. After they have amused themselves with this kind of toy a few times, they leave it to return to an old broken toy, or an old and immovable doll. Why is this? Because toys are for a child what idols or votive figures are for an uncivilized people—creatures subject to his will, creatures upon whom he wishes continually to exercise that will. Now, the mechanical toy does not leave the child free to exercise this magic power. Instead of being the master he is the slave of his toy, because the action of this toy is fixed and limited by its mechanism. And as the child wishes to command and not to obey, he soon frees himself from his tyrant. Let us ask, on the other hand, what a network of relations a small child is capable of extending between her doll and herself and the things and creatures by which they are surrounded. We think that the child is playing with her doll, but in reality she is making up a whole imaginary life and subjecting the doll to a continuous exercise of magic, consisting of obedience and resistance, of orders, prohibitions, and rewards.

And the fact that girls remain longer attached to the magic conception in their play, while boys give up their toys early to find their pleasure in the free exercise of their physical powers, not only marks the earliest detachment between the masculine and feminine minds, which becomes more and more distinct during the conquest of life, but is in perfect accordance with the different position occupied by men and women in all ages, both in religion and in relation to all the sentiments connected with the religious conception. Man denies and rebels, woman is conservative and submits. The former more easily breaks through the bonds of magic.

This elementary magic art, which we have compared with the art of the lowest stratum of modern society and with the art of children, may be presented under different aspects among

different peoples, just as it may display greater or less talent in the treatment of form. It may be naturalistic, or so geometric as to be unrecognizable, but the original idea determines its kind. As the figures are made only for a useful purpose, their value is recognized only by the efficacy of their action, not by the greater or less perfection of their appearance; there is no inclination to the careful study of form or attempt at approaching nature more nearly. Even when this form of art, as in the case of the productions of the reindeer period or the more modern creations of the Bushman, seems naturalistic, it is an instinctive, impressionist naturalism, determined perhaps by a special faculty of observation inherent in the people, possibly sharpened by daily contact with the animals on whom their life depends, not a progressive naturalism reached by voluntary study of nature with an artistic intention, as is the naturalism of the Hellenistic period in Greek art or the naturalism of modern art. Now, as in magic art the figure is only valued for its utility and not for its greater or less resemblance to nature, it follows that this art instinctively closes the way to gradual improvement: and as it was practised a thousand years ago, so it is still practised by the same people.

Form in Magic Art.

Let us add to this that magic art remains on the whole an individual art, that is, its productions are intended for single individuals. It creates separately, does not establish a tradition. Each artist recommences his work on his own account, and necessarily produces rough and primitive forms. He has too great a struggle with the first difficulties of any reproduction of figures to give time to an accurate treatment of form.

Also, when a tradition has been established in this art the results are the same. If the tradition has been established it is because of the persuasion that the images used by an ancestor are the most efficacious in obtaining the desired results. It is one of the canons of magic that to obtain good results

it is necessary to keep scrupulously to the formula, not changing in any way that which has been recognized as best in that special case. Now as this scrupulous adherence to tradition extends also to the images used in magic functions, the artist will close his eyes to every invitation which may come from nature, and will reproduce his images in the traditional aspect in which they have been handed down. The productions of shamanist art, which are all made as if from a recipe, testify to this.

Magic art is then a fettered art. To be able to develop, to gradually approach nature in the reproduction of form, it must cast off the magic element and become a profane art; in other words, it would have to lose the reason of its existence.

Magic character of Literature, Music and Dancing.

We will now point out briefly how the religious idea regulates the life of a people and influences its other intellectual manifestations, beginning with architecture, which is the first to be brought into relation with plastic art because its forms also are a limitation of space. No one can say for certain that the structural characteristics of a building depend upon the religious conception. They are determined rather by the conditions of the site, and especially by the material obtainable there. The building, like the arms, utensils, and implements made by man, has to fulfil a defensive function inherent in the actual form itself, not in the will for action added thereto by man, as is the case in works of plastic art. The hut must afford shelter as the axe must cut, and the hut and the axe perform this by virtue only of their form. Architecture and industry are, therefore, the human arts from which almost every element of magic is absent. They are in fact based upon a principle opposed to magic—the exact knowledge of the laws of causality, for if the stone axe has a point and cutting edges, and the hut a sloping roof, their forms have been determined by observation of the cut made by a body with hard thin edges and of the fall of rain

along a sloping superficies. Elementary facts, it may be, but by this means man has understood Nature as she is, and recognized her existence without attempting arbitrarily to modify her action.

But if architecture generally speaking owes nothing to the religious conception so far as its structural elements are concerned, yet the proportions and the destination of the building, as well as the accessories and the decoration, may have been influenced by it. But even from this point of view there is little to be said of the architecture of the uncivilized races. It is indeed one of the arts least cultivated among them. The conditions of life among these peoples cause them to be satisfied with a shelter beneath rocks, caves, or simple huts. Still less do we know of the architecture of prehistoric races, for it has been in great part destroyed on account of the material used. But if we observe that in the caves of the reindeer age the magic paintings are found in the depths of the most sheltered part of the caverns, and if we notice some singular details of construction in the megalithic funeral monuments, and wonder at their gigantic proportions, which could not have answered to any requirement of earthly life, we must allow that in these cases the religious conception has also made its influence felt upon architecture. We have, however, no means of determining more precisely the degree of this influence.

The religious conception has had more weight with the other intellectual manifestations of these peoples—upon their literature, music, and dancing. If we can term literature the sentiments expressed orally by this people devoid of culture, and handed down in fixed formulæ from generation to generation, then we can say that their literature is of the same type as their art. Like their art, the literature has magic intention, as both with line and speech man follows the same object, asking in order to obtain. The literary productions which these uncultured people express orally from time to time are

invocations, prayers, and hymns, ritual formulæ which were to accompany the magic practices frequently carried out upon art images, and form a literature intended to be useful rather than to give pleasure.

Even music and dancing, both originally manifestations of the imitative instinct applied to the reproduction of sounds and the movements of natural beings and phenomena, display among the uncivilized peoples a magical character, a utilitarian character. This does not appear evident to one who considers the music and dancing of the present day apart from their historical antecedents, for no branch of human art has so completely detached itself from its utilitarian character. But one who knows what a great part music and dancing took in the life of uncivilized peoples, both in initiation ceremonies and in preparation for war or hunting, or any other event on which their well-being and safety depended, and how both the one and the other tended by their imitation of sound and gesture to assure the satisfactory result of dangerous undertakings in the future or the protection of superior beings, and who knows that there are people who spend nearly all their time in sacred music and dancing, will recognize that these two arts are originally connected in their origin with the same religious idea as that on which the characteristics of plastic art and literature depend.*

And if in the history of the human race the dance has gradually lost this magical intention, and become a purely æsthetic manifestation—and in this field, as in so many other manifestations of the spirit, the greater part belongs to the Greek nation, for the "choros" of the Greek tragedy represents in its evolution the gradual rejection of the magical character of the original mimetic dance—if in the same way music, from being a reproduction of natural sounds as in the beginning, has now become the expression of the most delicate sentiments of the human spirit, and in fact the voice of the

* Compare E. Grosse, *op. cit.*, p. 216 f.

soul—even here Greek genius has effected much, if not the greater part—all this is owing to a change in the religious idea, a change in the fundamental characteristics of civilization.

We can understand why music and dancing lost before the other arts their original value in the religious conceptions of uncivilized people, or rather how they changed their character while remaining in the service of a religious conception. Imitation by sound and gesture is one of the most elementary forms of magic; it is one of the forms which had to be given up or altered so as to be unrecognizable as soon as a more advanced religious conception considered it too rough and primitive to succeed in its intended scope. These then are the arts which first broke away from the bonds which united them to a religious conception, and had first to find a new way of life on their own account unless they would run to meet death. They were the first human arts to become, so to speak, profane, because they were the first to put themselves in a state of dependence on religion. Plastic art, in fact, does not occupy the same position which is held among uncivilized peoples by dancing and music in the service of a religious conception, just as music and dancing no longer hold the position which plastic art has in the service of a religious conception among people of culture. The reason is simple: when a magic function is required—that is, an essentially imitative function—man has in his voice and his limbs the instruments necessary for the function; in plastic art, on the other hand, he must create something outside his person, must procure instruments for the function. If he wishes to bring about the death of an enemy by a magical action, it is easier to carry out the action by the movements of his own body than to draw or carve or mould a figure to serve as a foundation for this action.

Though I have said that the whole religious conception of uncivilized peoples is directed to assure the present and the

future, and that all their intellectual manifestations, especially in plastic art and literature, bear this imprint, I do not deny that these peoples may sometimes by these manifestations hand down the record of the past. The past, however, in the memory of these primitive men loses its sharpness of outline and acquires an uncertain aspect, in which the elements of yesterday are confused with those of the more distant past.

Lack of Historic Sense in Uncivilized Peoples.

The commemorative element is infinitesimal in the creations of these people. Some hymn may preserve the memory of enterprises carried out by their forefathers—that is, they may have made an attempt at epic or narrative poetry; but for the development of this kind of literature it is necessary that the deeds done in the past should appear finer and greater than those done in the present, or that can be hoped for in the future. This condition is lacking in a primitive civilization, since primitive man is compelled by the necessities of life to concentrate his forces on doing, not on remembering. The accumulation of records of the past from generation to generation would be an incumbrance quite useless for the instruction of the people, who need, above all, to know what will be of use to them in order to live. They take, therefore, from the experience of the past the teaching, the ritual formula, the invocation, all that has active force—in fact, what is necessary; but not the chance details and contingencies which in former times and occasions have accompanied the action which they continue to carry on—in a word, the casual. It is of no interest to a savage to know that his forefathers conquered their enemies or had good hunting, or when this happened; what matters to him is the means by which his forefathers conquered their enemies or obtained plenty of game—the magic formula by which they fought the enemy or attracted the game. A savage turns his attention to obtaining useful things, not to remembering useless things. If the complicated magical functions in which he wastes much of his time seem to us useless

for the attainment of the desired object, this is owing to the false position which we take in examining his actions: he is certain that without these functions he would never succeed in his aims.

We can thus understand the rarity of the commemorative element in the literature of uncivilized races. It is certainly not entirely lacking, for these people, when they ask themselves the reason of things in the world, have many times had to make up a history of it, and have attributed some events from their past life to the higher beings whom they believe to rule over nature. This commemorative element is, however, exceedingly small in proportion to the other elements which serve to assure the present and the future.

And what is the case in literature is still more the case with plastic art. I know of no uncivilized people in whose art the commemorative element is the greater; in fact, this element is generally wanting. No uncivilized people has ever thought of representing by form the deeds of their forefathers. Sometimes the people may have felt the need of handing down, by means of drawing or sculpture, the memory of some great undertaking which they had just carried out—the Bushmen, for instance, celebrated in one of their paintings their fight with the Kaffirs in a cattle raid; the Esquimaux have recorded their hunting and fishing—but in this case the predominating idea is care for the future: the artists wished to show to their contemporaries and leave to posterity the record of what had been done. This art is historical only in appearance: it takes up the action of the present or the immediate past to preserve it for the future. It is the same intention as that which recorded the deeds of the Pharaoh or of the reigning prince in Egyptian or Babylonian art, not that which impelled a Greek artist to paint the Nekyia or the taking of Troy, or a Christian artist to represent a divine miracle. The former shows an occurrence of the present or of the immediate past to keep the record for posterity, the latter takes a subject

which happened in the distant past to place it before the eyes of his contemporaries. The former is chronicle, the latter is history.

In conclusion, the religious conceptions of uncivilized races show in all their intellectual manifestations the thought for the present or the future, and impress a utilitarian character on the products of these manifestations. They are races without a history, and their art, when it does attempt to record anything, fixes not the past for the present, but the present for the future.

And these are the fundamental elements left by one of the most splendid civilizations and arts of antiquity, the civilization and art of Egypt. The Egyptian nation was the greatest of uncivilized peoples. This seems a paradox when one thinks of the immense store of works of art and writings left by it, but it is the truth, which appears clearly if we examine its religion, its art, and its general civilization.

III

EGYPT

Unity of Egyptian civilization—Origin, nature and aspect of the gods—Scanty mythology of the gods—Absence of a heroic mythology—Funerary conception—Works of art inspired by religion—Direction given to the representation of the gods—Impulse given to funerary art—Isolation of Egyptian religion—Egyptian architecture—Egyptian literature.

When Herodotus (II, 37) calls the Egyptian people most pious, and tries to identify their gods with those of the Greeks, he is answered by Juvenal (XV, 1–13), who considers them foolish and ridicules the objects of their cult and their religious practices. Egyptian religion really gives both these impressions. On the one hand, the constant care to show honour to the gods and to the dead indicates a people of deeply devout temperament, while on the other hand, the form in which this devotion was shown testifies to a low grade of culture. But modern research has neither the admiration of the Greek historian nor the irony of the Latin poet; it endeavours to understand the nature of this religious conception, and in order to understand the later life inquires into its origins. And as for the period for which written documents are lacking we can only find the reflection of a religious conception in the sculptured monuments, we ask of these the answer to the problem of the origin of Egypt, of its whole civilization from religion to art.

Unity of Egyptian Civilization.

But though the number of known primitive monuments

of Egyptian art and industry is increased by fresh discoveries, and we are now acquainted with a period of prehistoric art before the dynastic period, the origin of Egyptian art is still obscure. This may be owing to lacunæ in our knowledge of the monuments; but between the works of the prehistoric period, which display all the characteristics of an art in its infancy, and the works of the early dynastic period, in which we already find those features which are considered peculiar to Egyptian art in its whole course, there exists an abyss which there has been a vain attempt to fill by pointing out in prehistoric works certain features which are found again in a modified and improved form in the works of dynastic periods.

Until new discoveries of monuments throw a connecting bridge between the two periods of this art, a possible solution may be that the early dynastic art is owing to the immigration of a new people, which established itself in the Valley of the Nile with the prehistoric population in subjection to it and laid the foundations of the Egypt of the Pharaohs.*

And the most marked proof of the separation between prehistoric and protodynastic art is given by religion. There is no figure in prehistoric art which—I will not say represents the characteristic aspect of the theriomorphic gods of the Egyptian pantheon, but which even foreshadows their appearance.

The whole of Egyptian prehistoric art in sculpture consists of small figures of human beings and of animals.† The types are few and not very characteristic. It is impossible to say for certain what is the meaning or function of these figures. Only by comparison with the art of other uncivilized races, and the fact that they are found in tombs, when they are not certainly decorative parts of utensils, could lead us to see in them a magical intention.‡ The figures of animals were

* Compare A. J. Reinach, *L'Egypte préhistorique*, Paris, 1908, p. 36 ff.

† J. Capart, *Les Débuts de l'Art en Egypte*, Bruxelles, 1904.

‡ A. J. Reinach, *op. cit.*, p. 10 f.

possibly to provide food for the dead, and the human figures may be images of persons of his family and of his servants placed near him that they might serve him in the life beyond the grave as on earth.

Nor can we deduce much from the rough drawings of this prehistoric art, which represent boats sailing, huts, etc. To them also a magic value is attributed.

But, however doubtful are the origins, with the dynastic period begins that civilization which is held to be characteristically Egyptian, and which maintained itself for thousands of years in the Valley of the Nile, until, after being shaken by the advent of the Greeks and by the Roman dominion, it wore itself out beneath the attacks first of Christianity and later of Islam.

With the dynastic period all the elements of this civilization appear to be established in their fundamental features, from writing to language, from religion to art. Through the various political changes connected with the history of the country from the earliest dynastic period (I-III dynasty before 2800 B.C.), through the ancient empire (dynasties IV-VI 2800–2300 B.C.), the middle kingdom (dynasties XI-XIII, 2000–1800 B.C.), the rule of the Hyksos, the new kingdom (dynasties XVIII-XX, 1600–1100 B.C.), the Libyan period, the Saïte (660-527 B.C.), the Persian (527–332 B.C.), and the Greek (332–30 B.C.), till the establishment of the Roman dominion (from 30 B.C.), the essential nucleus of this civilization always remains the same. One might point out periods of prosperity and of decadence, record the isolated attempts of certain Pharaohs to impose some reform (such as the religious reform of Amen-hetep IV), but neither Asiatic invaders nor Libyan rulers, nor Persian kings, nor Greek princes, nor Roman emperors have ever been able to break through the close circle of Egyptian civilization, or have been able even to effect any substantial modification in any part of it. It was easier for them to bear the burden.

Religion and Art

If Egyptian civilization is a compact mass which has resisted every attack from outside, this is chiefly owing to the nature of its religion. Thus the script, as well as its literary components, its artistic forms and the subjects represented by them, the covering and the content, reveal the tendency given by the religious conception.

Origin, Nature and Aspect of the Gods.

In the case of Egypt we are right in speaking rather of a religious tendency than of one religion, common to the whole country and to all strata of the population. But even with material so rich as that offered by the literature and art of Egypt it is impossible to trace a complete picture of the Egyptian religion. It would be a mistake to attempt it, for though the Egyptians themselves for centuries tried to fit their pantheon into a logical organization of the succession and dependence of the gods, this organization was never fully completed.

Owing to the division of the country, due to the conditions of life determined by the course and the inundations of the Nile, every city and every district had its characteristic local gods. But the political changes which tended to the unification of the country, a unification disturbed at certain times but substantially preserved through all the historic period, demanded religious unity, and favoured a process of centralization of cults and deities. The god of the chief city becomes the most important god of the State, and the gods of other places are either identified with him or become subordinate. And as various cities have at different times been capital cities either for historical reasons or because they were favoured by the princes, there is no single god in the Egyptian pantheon who can be considered as supreme, but there are many which have either successively or contemporaneously assumed this pre-eminence. Let us add that though the various cities and districts honoured the chief god of the capital, they did not forget their local gods, they only added the new to the old;

they did not destroy but they accumulated. So this complicated inheritance of religious ideas and images increased through the various ages.

If the Greeks, who intentionally laboured for it during several centuries, from the Homeric age through the period of the poems of the cycle and tragedy even to a learned mythography, tried in vain to organize a pantheon and a mythology without lacunæ and without contradictions, and if neither Christianity nor Buddhism, resting as they do on historical tradition, succeeded in the same task since their canonical and apocryphal writings show the contradictions of different editing, it is not to be wondered at that regular unity was not reached by Egypt, where a crowd of various deities and cults jostled each other.

But though we cannot say that there was religious unity in Egypt, there was, as we have said, a general religious tendency, for, however different the local gods were, the idea which determined their nature and aspect was substantially the same.

In the nature and aspect of the Egyptian gods there appear as fundamental elements the connection with astral phenomena and animal forms. Sometimes these elements coexist in the same god, sometimes an astral god has a human aspect and a theriomorphic god has no relation with celestial phenomena, but one or other of these characteristics is usually present.

At the root of each of these elements we must look for the totemistic idea, that is, an agreement for reciprocal protection established between a group of individuals and a celestial phenomenon or a genus of animals. The influence exercised upon the economic life of a country by the regular course of the sun and moon, on which depended the fertilizing inundations, and the permanent danger to the life of men and flocks from the attacks of the wild beasts of the desert, must have contributed to the origin of totemistic conventions.

As the result of associations and dissociations which now evade research, the totems personified in celestial phenomena may have assumed animal forms, and the totems personified in animals may have acquired astral significance.

An originally totemistic idea is indicated not only by the representation of certain gods under the form of animals, but also the prohibition to touch any individual one of a species of animal held sacred, and also the rearing of these animals in the sanctuary, so that protection might always be at hand. The fact that later on in the historical period this respect for animals, instead of diminishing, was increased to the point of aberration does not disprove its totemistic origin, but is only the result of the phenomenon of involution which is frequently found in the religious conceptions of Egypt.

Having recognized this totemistic basis, we must notice that we are not only very far from the totemism displayed among savages of the present day, which I have already pointed out as a conventionalized totemism, but we are also far from the totemism which by induction we may consider as the primitive form. The totemistic convention for mutual protection and respect is established between all the individuals of a clan and all the individuals of a given species of animals, and has therefore an animistic basis, while the totemism perceived in Egyptian religion, when it appears on the primitive monuments, is a compact of protection and respect established between all the individuals of a clan and one single animal or one single being with human body and the head of an animal, and rests therefore on a theistic basis. Not every hawk is Horus or every cow Hathor, but only one certain hawk and one certain cow, or one certain being with human body and the head of a hawk, or with human body and the head of a cow. We have direct proof of this diversity of idea: at Mendes honour was paid to the sacred ram and at Memphis to the sacred bull in which the god was supposed to be incorporated. When the ram or the bull died, the god lived again in another bull or

another ram, but not every bull or ram was Apis or the ram of Mendes, but one bull or one ram distinguished by special signs. We have here an individualization evidently determined by a theistic and not an animistic conception. Egyptian totemism is therefore far from its primitive source, and taking these gods with human body and animal's head as characteristic of this religion, we may suppose gods of this form to have arisen in course of time without any totemistic origin. In the same way, in the Greek and Roman religions, once it was established that the gods were of human appearance, gods or abstract personifications were created in this same form during historic times. In this way we may explain the mixed crowd of gods, resembling each other in form but differing in name and nature, which fill the Egyptian pantheon, and owe their existence rather to the meticulous speculations of the theologian than to the free conception of the people.

This recession of Egyptian religious ideas from a primitive form of totemism, with re-elaboration of its elements by which other and similar figures of gods have been created, explains how Egypt, by the side of gods in the shape of an animal and gods with the head of an animal, had also other gods of purely human form.

I have already remarked that a theistic conception need not be later than an animistic conception, but that both may exist together and may be applied to explain various phenomena, for while one clan is connected by a link of totemistic protection with one species of animal, it may believe that many other phenomena or events depend on the government of higher beings. If this coexistence of different conceptions seems illogical—and it would be natural that the higher being or beings that rule over other phenomena and preside over all other happenings should also have to protect the clan in all the circumstances in which they ask protection of the animal totem—we must remember that other religions are equally illogical. For instance, after admitting one supreme deity

who has dominion over the whole world, they consider other superior beings as regulators of a certain circle of events, and value their intervention as more efficacious. Now, if we allow that the Egyptian people had a primordial theistic conception beside an animistic totemic conception, it is possible that these gods or higher beings may have been conceived in purely human form. And this would explain why the most ancient images of gods which have come to light on Egyptian soil, the images of the god Min discovered at Koptos, represent a god in human form.

In the second place, once that process of passage already referred to was begun—*i.e.*, the passage from a totemistic to a theistic conception, by which the god with the head of an animal but with a human body was substituted for the protective being in the perfect shape of an animal—it was natural that the process should not be interrupted, and that in place of the god with a beast's head a god with a completely human form should be substituted, but with some animal characteristic, such as the horns or ears, attesting to his origin. This threefold aspect we have, for example, in the goddess Hathor, but we cannot establish a sequence of these types in point of time. We might in other cases imagine an inverse process—that of the gradual acquirement of animal characteristics by a god originally conceived in human form, so as to bring the figure more into connection with the dominant idea. The goddess Hathor, for example, could be represented in the form of a cow (Fig. 11), or as a woman with a cow's head (Fig. 12), or as a woman with the face of a woman but the horns of a cow (Fig. 13).

From this attachment of the Egyptian religion to beast forms we may conclude that the totemistic idea must have prevailed from the earliest origin of that religion, in the mind of the people, at least, if not in their art. Even when the theriomorphic gods were humanized, they were humanized in that part which shows this humanization least—the body—

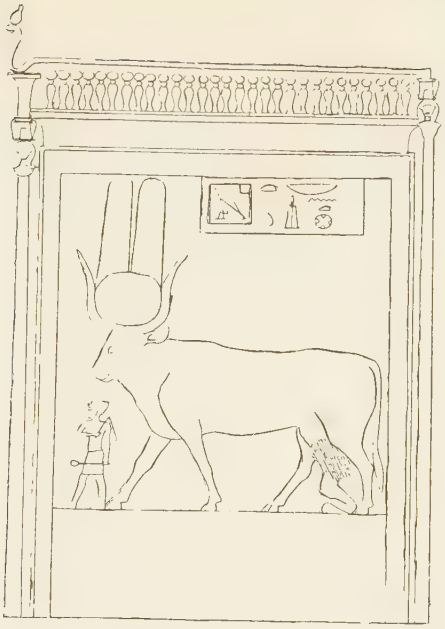

FIG. 11.—HATHOR.

Dendera.

(*Lepsius*, ix., pl. 70 b.)

FIG. 12.—HATHOR

Dendera.

(*Lepsius*, ix., pl. 57 b.)

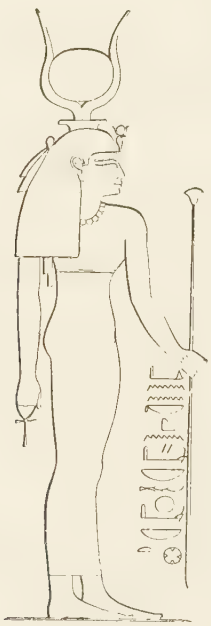

FIG. 13.—HATHOR.

Karnak.

(*Lepsius*, vi., pl. 125 c.)

[*See page* 76.]

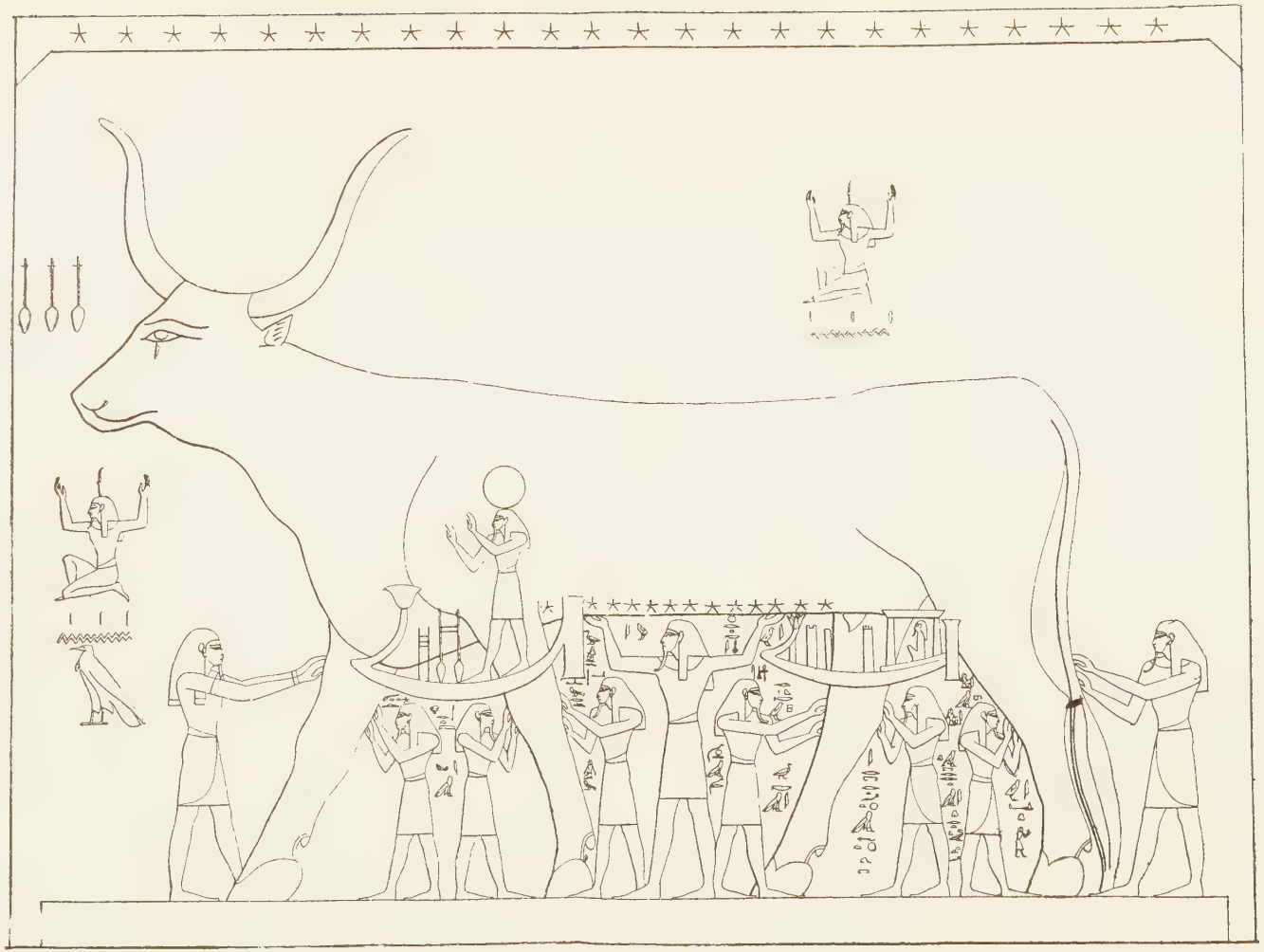

FIG. 14.—NUT (THE HEAVENS) IN THE FORM OF A COW, SUPPORTED BY SHU (THE AIR) AND TRAVERSED BY THE BOAT OF THE SUN.

Tomb of Seti I, Bîbân el-Mulûk.

(*Lefébure*, "*Miss. arch. franç. au Caire*," ii., sect. iv., pl. 17.) [*See page* 81.]

leaving the beast's head, in which the characteristics of the creature are most concentrated. A creature part beast, part man, produces the impression of a beast when it still has the beast's head; it becomes a man when it has a man's head even upon a beast's body. Compare any of the Egyptian theriomorphic gods with the creatures of the Chaldæo-Assyrian religion, formed on the opposite principle—the androcephalous bull or lion—and the difference will be at once apparent: though the beast form preponderates, these figures will seem more human than the Egyptian ones, for the face alone characterizes them as men.

The Egyptian religion has not been able to overcome the preponderating influence of the beast element in its gods. And when in certain rare cases this religion recognizes creatures having the body of a beast with the head of a man, these creatures are not counted among the gods, but are found in the human circle. The sphinx, the lion with a human head, was, in fact, originally a personification of the power of the Pharaoh, and the Ba, the bird with a human head, represents the soul which leaves the body at death.

This preponderance and this persistence of the beast element in the representation of the gods has had a strong influence on the actual religious idea and prevented any distinction of form between the good and evil spirits. This sort of dualism has never been absent from those forms of religion which have not reached the point of uniting under the power of one single god the dominion over good and evil, and is often found in an embryonic stage in the most highly developed religions. The most obvious distinction of form between these two opposing principles is that in which the evil spirits have the entire form of beasts, or at least beast heads, while the good spirits are of completely human appearance or, at least, have human heads. It is, in fact, from animals that man may chiefly expect injury. This idea is so deeply rooted in the mind of the people that it is expressed in religions far distant from each other as well

as in widely differing religions. To give a few examples shown in plastic art, I will quote the beast heads given by the Assyrio-Babylonian religion to the demons of disease, and the fact that in the Greek theogony and mythology all the evil monsters are beast-like in form—theriomorphic creatures ; that in the Buddhist religion the host of Mâra which attacks the Buddha are monsters with animal features, and that the demons of the Christian creed are of the same form.

This distinction of form is not found in the Egyptian religion. The gods who are favourable to man and the beings who fight against the gods or bring harm to men are the same in appearance. It would be impossible to distinguish between them if it were not for some attribute or some accessory or other. The evil guardians of the pylons and the forty-two terrible judges in the *Book of the Dead*, and the beings who try to hinder the progress of the boat of the sun in the *Book of what is in the Tuat* are in appearance equal to the gods.

But in this circumstance also we may recognize the trace of the original totemistic idea. When totemism establishes a protective compact with certain animals, it sees in the animals at the same time the maleficent creature and the beneficent being. Man will have to fear them when he fails in his compact, he will receive help from them as long as he respects it. Totemism thus personifies in the same figure both good and evil: the Egyptian religion has preserved this unity.

Scanty Mythology of the Gods.

Now that we have examined the gods in their origin, their essence, and their aspect, we will examine their actions and their relation to each other—that which should be their mythology. Here we shall bring to light an important fact with regard to Egyptian religion—though we find, even in the most ancient texts, allusions to mythical facts, there is no real mythological literature. Possibly such a literature has never existed, not because it was thought superfluous to fix in writing that which might

be transmitted orally, but because it did not seem necessary for men to know the history of the gods, and because this history never acquired the exactness of outline or sufficient extension to make it suitable for literary treatment. This is why the Egyptian myths, of which we have a detailed account, have come to us only from late magical writings and from Greek texts.

This agrees with what I have said of the literature of uncivilized peoples. These races chiefly expect from the gods protection in the present and the future, and require therefore to know the formulæ and the prayers by means of which they may obtain this protection, and do not care about what the gods have done in the past—their history. If some remembrance of that past is brought up, it is because it is of importance with regard to the fate of other men, and therefore the reference to it gives a reason for obtaining the required protection. The Egyptians were at this very stage: they created thousands of inscribed monuments to ensure for themselves this protection in life and in death, and did not think it necessary to dedicate the smallest part of these to record the deeds of the gods.

However, when at the time of political centralization the various local gods were collected in one pantheon and relations of descent, relationship, or friendship among them had to be established a somewhat fragmentary story of the gods, full of contradictions and parallels, was invented. And of this story we have an echo in magical books of late date. But this mythology is a very poor thing, and when we have noted the creation of the world, the punishment of wicked men, and the myth of Osiris, Isis, Set, and Nephthys, which stands alone, we have recorded all that is essential.*

The myth of the creation of the world relates that in the beginning there was only chaos, or original water called Nu. In this arose the sun-god in the form of Khepera, or the Beetle.

* A. Erman, *Die Ægyptische Religion* (second edition), Berlin, 1909, p. 32 ff.

He begat Shu and Tefnut, the god and the goddess who held up the heavens. These gods in their turn created Keb, the god of earth, and Nut, the goddess of the sky, whence came Osiris and Set, Isis and Nephthys. Osiris married Isis and Set espoused Nephthys. As these gods formed the great ennead of Heliopolis, the intention of connecting gods who were naturally separate and only united by political centralization is evident. The first five were gods of the sky and of earth, and the last four constituted the special Osiris group. This is evidently an arbitrary grouping, for Horus, who, according to tradition, is the son of Osiris and Isis, is also one of the forms under which the sun was worshipped: the ennead is thus enclosed within a circle, the two extremities of whose circumference overlap.

The myth of the punishment of man relates that Ra, the sun, had ruled over gods and men, but that when he became old, men conspired together to harm him. This plot became known to Ra, and he called the gods together to take counsel with them. The gods suggested that he should throw his eye at the men. Ra agreed, and the eye fell to earth as the goddess Hathor. Hathor returned to heaven after she had begun her work of destruction, but Ra, fearing that Hathor would destroy all mankind, the next day flooded with a liquid resembling blood the fields where Hathor was going to kill the men. When Hathor returned in the morning she looked at her reflection in this lake, drank of it, and no longer recognized the men, and so mankind was saved.

The general outline of the myth of Osiris, Isis, Set, and Nephthys is as follows: These deities are brothers and sisters, and Osiris is the husband of Isis, Set of Nephthys. Osiris is a good, just, and brave prince. Set hates him for this and lays plots against him, from which Osiris is saved by the loving watchfulness of Isis. At last, however, Set succeeds in killing his brother. Isis goes to look for the body of her husband, finds it, and sets up a grievous lamentation with her sister

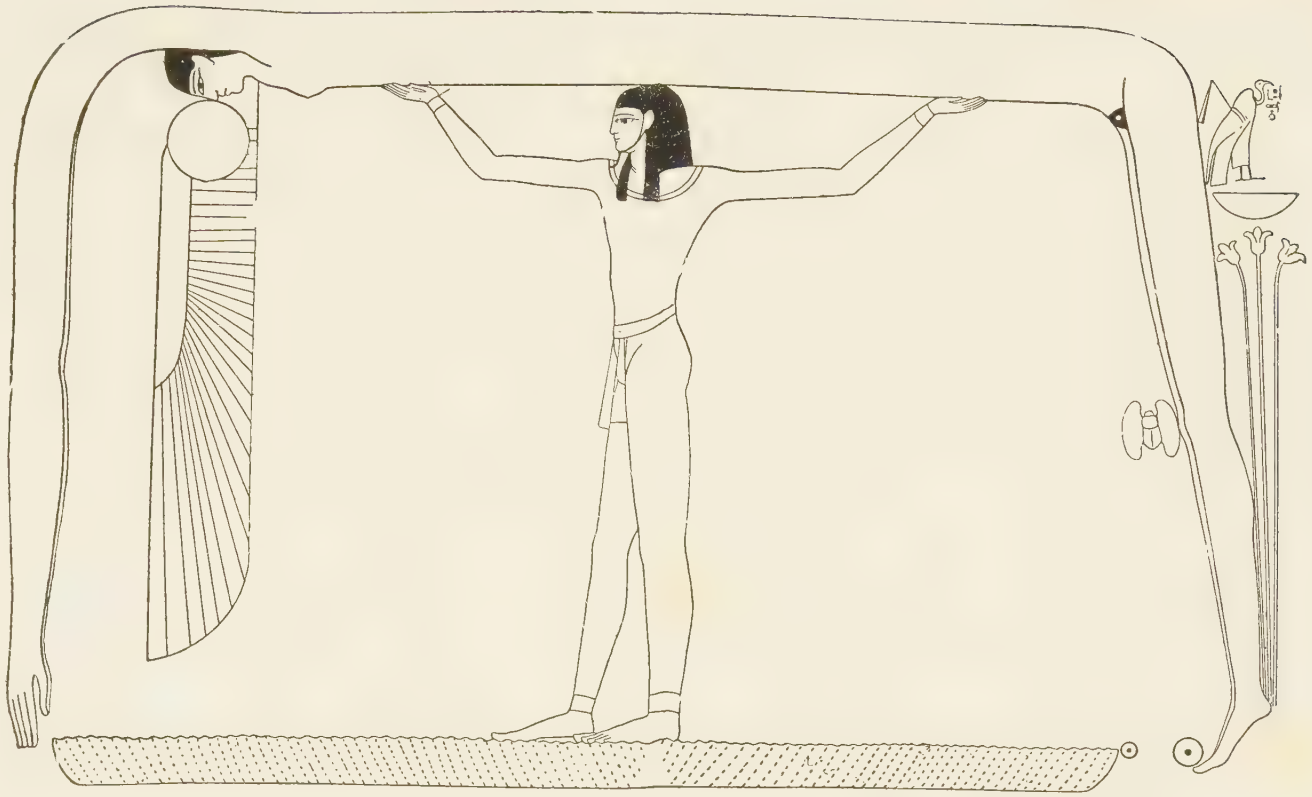

FIG. 15.—NUT (THE HEAVENS) IN THE FORM OF A WOMAN, SUPPORTED BY SHU (THE AIR) AND CROSSED BY THE SUN.

Tomb of Rameses IX, Bîbân el-Mulûk.

(*Rosellini*, "*Mon. d. Culto*," pl. 67, 68.)

[*See page* 81.]

To face p. 80.

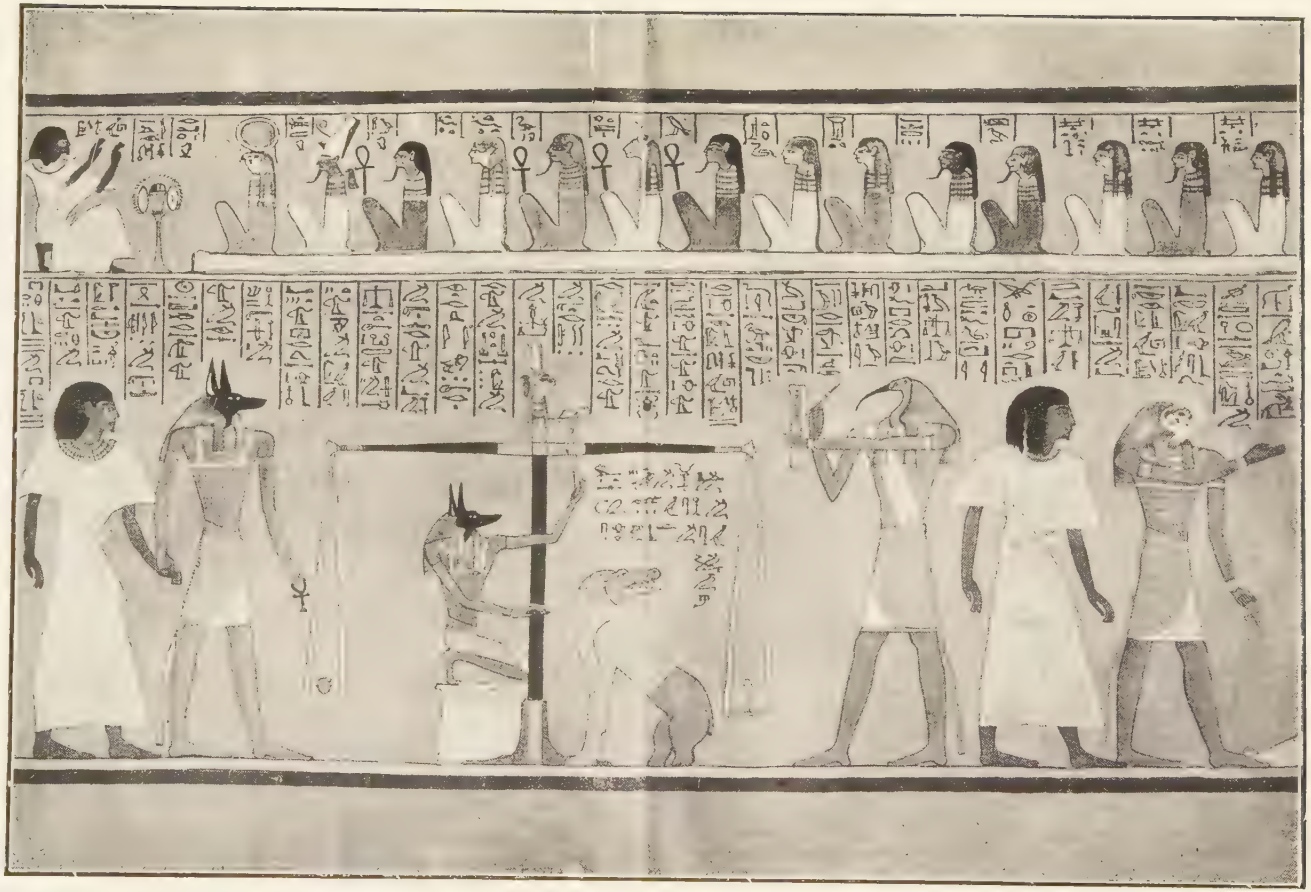

FIG. 16.—HUNEFER BROUGHT TO THE JUDGMENT OF OSIRIS.

From the Papyrus of Hunefer found at Thebes. (British Museum.)

(*Budge*, "*The Book of the Dead*," pl. 4.)

[*See page* 89.]

Nephthys. Ra takes pity on them and sends Anubis to bury Osiris. Anubis lays out the body of Osiris and embalms it; Isis reanimates him with her wings. And then Osiris begins a second life as king of the dead. But Isis, having placed herself, in the form of a hawk, on the body of her husband, becomes pregnant. She takes refuge in the marshes of the Delta, gives birth to Horus and rears him. When Horus grows up he avenges his father by fighting against Set and overcoming him.

If to these myths, which are not substantially modified by their variants, we add the myth of the creation of men, who arose from the tears shed by the sun when his eye was removed, and that of the origin of the moon, which relates that Ra sent Thoth to shine in the heavens while he himself was illuminating the lower regions, we shall have exhausted the fundamental nucleus of Egyptian mythology.

Beyond these myths, in which the gods are concerned only in a single completed action, the Egyptian gods are chiefly occupied in a constant work which they are obliged to carry on, to which they were destined from the beginning and which they must continue now and in the future. The gods of Egypt are forced to perform a hard task as monotonous as that of men on earth. And woe if they failed in this duty —the universe would be filled with ruin!

Shu and Tefnut, or Shu alone, must continually hold up the vault of heaven, Nut, represented either in the form of a cow (Fig. 14) or in that of a woman face downward, resting upon her hands and feet (Fig. 15). If for one instant they rested from their task, Nut would fall upon Keb, the earth. And when, according to another idea, the heavens are imagined as a great river of water, four gods—Hap, Mestha, Qebhsennuf, Tuamutef, sons of Horus—have to stand at the four corners to prevent the stream from being poured out upon the earth.

The sun-god has every day to pass in his boat along this stream or along the belly of Nut to give light to men, and to

make this journey he has to fight against the clouds and storms and against his constant enemy, the serpent Apepi. Thus, though young in the morning, he is old by evening. And when he reaches the west, instead of resting he has to begin the most dangerous part of the voyage, that of the subterranean river, which he must cross if he wishes to get back to shine in the east. He leaves the day boat for that of the night and completes his night journey through places where the want of wind makes navigation difficult and where dangerous enemies lie in ambush, till he again begins his day journey ; and this goes on for ever.

So, too, Osiris sits as judge in the land of the dead, and must always be ready to weigh the good and evil deeds of those who descend to his kingdom, while Horus has to bring the dead man before him, Anubis has to weigh his heart in the balance and Thoth to register in the book the result of this weighing. Both the celestial regions and the underworld swarm with deities or demons forced to perform a never-ending task.

Here we have gods of a very different type from the free gods of Greece, such as Zeus, for example, who has time to carry on the most impudent of amorous adventures or contemplate from the heights of Mount Ida the fighting between the Achæans and the Trojans, and has time to feast and sleep. If we except the gods of celestial phenomena, Phœbus and Selene, who are obliged to cross the vault of heaven with the chariot or on horseback, and are for this reason distinct divinities from the gods Apollo and Artemis, and except, too, Hades and Persephone, the gods who preside in Avernus, the Greek gods are beings who have no special work to do. On the other hand, if we except a few gods of whose actions we are ignorant because we are ignorant of their nature, all the gods of Egypt must toil unceasingly.

And this toil they carry on for the benefit of man. Such is the foundation of the primitive theistic idea. Man imagines superior beings only so far as he expects from them good or evil,

protection or aggression. Divinities or beings who perform no action for his advantage or disadvantage have no reason of existence for him. And when he imagines that these deities preside over the functions of celestial phenomena, as these functions are periodic and constant, so the work to which these deities are condemned for the benefit of man is periodic and constant. And as these gods were born with the phenomena over which they preside, and as there is no time for other action in the present or the future, there has been none in the past. If we except the myth of Osiris and his sisters, who lived on earth without a definite task before they assumed a special function in the kingdom of the dead, we perceive that this scanty Egyptian mythology relating to the creation of the world and the punishment of man is not really a mythology, for in these accounts we have simply an intimation of the functions to which the various gods are appointed.

Egypt, therefore, does not possess a mythology of the gods. If we turn our attention for a moment to the mythology of the gods left by the religion of Greece after a period of civilization which occupied a far smaller number of centuries than the civilization of Egypt, we can understand what kind of idea is absent from Egyptian religion. It is absent from this Egyptian religion because the religion of Egypt was, for reasons unknown to us, arrested at a primitive stage of development. The totemistic compacts with natural phenomena and with animals for protection remained its chief content. The gods who arose from this idea are still the incarnation of natural phenomena. Before a god can have a history it is necessary that he should no longer be the incarnation of a phenomenon, but should be a man or a being that acts as a man; should, in the first place, give up being only a creature of the present. Apis, Mnevis, the ram of Mendes, are, on the other hand, gods of the present —a present which is renewed at the death of each of these animals.

The god of the Egyptian religion is therefore not a being

who has lived in the past and who has now retired save for a general agreement for the protection of his worshippers, as he is in the Greek religion and in the Christian and Buddhist religions, and generally in all the religions in which the recording element has triumphed, but he is a being whose action is entirely carried on for the protection of the faithful and whose existence began with this function and continues permanently in it. A historic god does not exist among the Egyptians, while the Jahve of the Hebrews is a historic god, and the gods of paganism and the founders of Christianity and of Buddhism are historic gods also.

Absence of a Heroic Mythology.

In the religion of Egypt, besides the absence of a divine mythology, heroic mythology is also completely absent. Brave and adventurous beings such as the Gilgamesh of Babylonian tradition or Herakles of Greek tradition are not found in Egypt. The absence of a divine mythology has certainly influenced this want, because men become heroes of legend when they perform god-like actions or enter into relations with the gods. Gods whose life was not really rich in action could not attract men into their orbit that they might take rank as heroes: and gods whose timid worshippers expected every protection in life and in death could not tolerate among them beings who by their works showed themselves of equal power to the gods themselves.

But the chief reason which has prevented the formation of a heroic mythology is the all-powerful position of the Pharaoh in the history of Egyptian civilization. The Pharaoh stands as an obstacle and a shield between the god and the people. He is the living god, as Keb, Osiris, Set, Horus, Thoth, Maat, the gods of the past, have been originally rulers of Upper and Lower Egypt. The human kings, servants of Horus, are only the successors of the gods in the government of the country. After the gods there could be no figure greater than the Pharaoh, and as the dynastic principle, except during brief intervals, dominates

the whole history of the country, it is natural that no man should have been able, either in reality or in the imagination of the people, to perform deeds greater than those of the Pharaoh or even equal to these—could, in fact, have become a hero. Heroes such as Achilles or Odysseus, Hector or Ajax, arose only because between themselves and the gods there was no man held to be as great and venerable as the gods.

And it is therefore true that the presence of the Pharaoh has hindered the development of a mythology and that Egyptian art, when it was not applied to the service of religion in the decoration of temples and tombs, was used for the glorification of the deeds of the living Pharaoh. As we have observed with regard to similar manifestations of peoples without culture, the art of Egypt is not used to glorify a distant past, but to entrust the memory of a recent past to the memory of posterity. This art, then, does not possess a true historic character, if we understand this as the desire of individuals of the present time to recall the glories of the past; it lacks the characteristics which might bring it nearer to mythological art. Each Pharaoh feels the imperious necessity of connecting his own memory with the future by means of these works of art; not one feels the need of turning to the past, *i.e.*, of inviting artists to represent the deeds of his predecessors. The Athenians adorned the portico of their market-place not only with the representation of the battle of Marathon and the battle of Enoë, but also with the Amazonomachia of Theseus and the representation of the city of Troy after it was taken; the Attalids dedicated to the gods in Pergamos not only the group of the fight against the Galati, but also the representation of the Gigantomachia, the Amazonomachia, and the Persian war, but this idea of glorifying the present by recalling similar feats of the past could never come into the mind of an Egyptian prince. For this civilization of Egypt there existed a future, a present, or an immediate past, such as could be contained within the lifetime of a man, but a remote past had no existence. This people wrote much—

we shall see presently of what its literature consists—but it possessed no history.

Funerary Conception.

After the world of the gods we will turn to the world of the dead. A definite separation between them is not possible, for some gods, and among others the chief god, the sun-god, had either always or for a part of their time their place among the dead. But, as we have already pointed out, in discussing the nature of the gods, the protective capacity which they exercised in favour of living man, we will now examine the ideas of the Egyptians as to death, and we shall see what degree of protection was expected from the gods beyond the tomb.

Here, too, exact ideas are wanting and, what is more important, we can trace no one idea. From the inscriptions of the pyramids (Ancient Kingdom), from the funerary books preserved in the fullest form in the time of the New Kingdom, from the magical texts of the late period, it appears clear that the prevalent ideas on the fate in store for the dead were various and not always to be reconciled. All this is caused by the specialization of ideas and cults which had already arisen in relation to the gods. Every city and every district had its own idea, and after the political centralization these ideas became mixed and they overlapped. We will therefore notice the essential and the general idea without attempting to establish a logical organization where this does not really exist.

And before all we ask what the Egyptians thought would happen to the individual as an organism after death. The human being was for them a complex thing formed of several elements—the body, the shadow, the name, the "Ka" or double, the "Ba" or soul, besides others less easily understood or distinguished. It is no wonder that the Egyptian considered as separate things the shadow and the name when we remember that uncivilized races have similar ideas, and that the name is considered so personal an attribute that the belief was engendered

that magic spells worked upon the name would affect the individual. The prohibition to pronounce the names of sacred or terrible beings is found in highly developed religions, such as those of the Hebrews and the Greeks.

Among these various elements which constitute the human being, of chief importance, specially with regard to the fate of the individual after death, are the body, the Ba or soul, and the Ka or double, but more particularly this last. It was supposed that in every living being there existed a special vital force termed the Ka. Every man received this Ka at his birth and it remained with him through life. The Ka had the same appearance as the individual to whom it belonged. When the man died the Ka left him, but there was always the hope that it would still pay attention to the body which it had inhabited for so long a time, and that it would reanimate it, at least some day.

Besides the Ka, the existence of a Ba or soul was believed in, and this Ba also left the body at death. It could assume different shapes, such as a flower or a serpent, but was usually represented as a bird with a human head.

The co-existence of the Ka and the Ba is surprising, for when we try to distinguish their individuality we can perceive no clear outline. To a certain extent they are duplicates, for each is a vital principle which separates itself from the body and goes on living: in each lies the dualism between soul and body which is so apparent to the mind of man. But while the Ka is something that can be identified with the individual, as it retains its external appearance even after it has left the body and is therefore something similar to the shades of Dante (*Purg.* xxv, 91 ff.), the Ba is something which differs so much from the individual that it can assume different aspects. The obvious theory is that they are two concepts which have arisen independently to explain the departure of the spirit from the body at death. The two must have been preserved by the concentration of religion, although they were in reality duplicates of each

other. Egypt does not eliminate in its religion but accumulates. The conception of the Ka, however, preponderates over that of the Ba because the idea of the Ba establishes a distinction between the condition of the living creature and of the dead, which difference is effaced by the Ka. The body plus the Ba, or the elements which remain after death, cannot be identified with the individual as he was before death; on the other hand, the body plus the Ka after death is the same thing as the body plus the Ka before death. The Ka, because of the death, has been obliged to leave the body, but if the Ka returns to reanimate it, an individual equivalent to the living man will result from this. The idea of the Ka is therefore more materialistic than that of the Ba: therefore it has obtained the ascendancy among a people whom we have seen to be absolutely materialistic in the conception of their gods.

Having indicated the consequences of death for the individual as an organism, we will now see in what aspect the Egyptians imagined the world of the dead. Here, too, their ideas are varied and irreconcilable.

One of the fundamental ideas as to the world of the dead is connected with the course of the sun. The sun disappears in the west at night and returns in the morning in the east: it therefore passes through another world, a subterranean heaven, during the night. And this world is the world of the dead, a country of darkness, lighted only by the sun during his nocturnal course, that is, by a sun who was considered to be dead also. And as the sun travels along the river of heaven in a boat, he sails along the subterranean river in a boat also. This subterranean world was not localized at the antipodes of the terrestrial world: it was a great plain towards the north and stretched from east to west. The description of the nightly course of the sun in the world of the dead has been preserved in the New Kingdom in two books: the *Book of what is in the Tuat*—that is, in Avernus—and the *Book of Gates*. There are substantial differences in the two works,

for the *Book of what is in the Tuat*, being a production of Theban theology and therefore a glorification of Amen-Ra, the chief god of Thebes, gives to Osiris, the most popular of the gods of the Egyptian dead, a subordinate position and represents him as lord of a part only of the Tuat, while the *Book of Gates* leaves to Osiris his dominant position. The substance, however, of both books is the same, and the division of the subterranean kingdom into twelve parts, corresponding to the twelve hours of the night, which is given by each, shows that they originated in one single idea.

A different idea of the underworld, or at least of the fate of the dead, is given in a third funerary book, the *Book of the Dead*. The dead man is compared with Osiris and identified with him. As Osiris, after being slain by his brother Set, was recalled to life by the love of his sister-wife and by the compassion of the gods, the dead man who has had the same fate in the past, being deprived of life against his will, will have the future fate of Osiris and like him return to life. But Osiris even after his resurrection had been persecuted by Set, accused by him before the gods, and had to submit to their judgment, which was, however, in his favour. In the same way this judgment had to be submitted to by the dead man who desired to enter the kingdom of Osiris, the kingdom which had been bestowed on Osiris for his justice (Fig. 16). The dead man was therefore led by Horus into the court of Osiris, where the god was sitting in judgment with the forty-two divine judges. Here the dead man made his confession, his heart was weighed on the scales by Anubis, the weight being represented by the sign of truth, while Thoth registered the result. After this judgment the dead who had not been acquitted were not permitted to enter the kingdom of Osiris and had to remain hungry and thirsty in their tombs without seeing the sun by day or by night; or, according to another account, they were punished by judges armed with swords and torn to pieces by a horrible monster. The dead who were

found to be just had their place before the god and passed into the fields of Aaru to lead a happy life.

These fields of Aaru are the fruit of a less disconsolate and more cheerful theory of death. The Egyptians imagined the sky also to be a place of the dead. The stars shone in the sky: the chief stars were the gods, the countless small stars were perhaps the blessed souls who had been taken up to heaven. The heavens therefore were populated by Ba, by shades, spirits, vital forces, glorified bodies of dead men—by all those parts which constituted the human being according to Egyptian ideas. But besides this the dead man might be received into the boat of the sun and accompany him on his daily journey. According to another idea the blessed had a fixed dwelling-place in the north-east part of the heavens, and this place was imagined as a series of islands surrounded by water. In these islands, one of which was called the field of Aaru and, like the fields of earth, had canals for irrigation and became covered with verdure, the dead passed their future life in the same occupations as they had in this life and satisfied the same material needs which had given them pleasure on earth.

The ideas of the Egyptians as to the kingdom of the dead contained, as we see, the same accumulation of irreconcilable and contradictory traits as the theory of the gods and of the personality of the dead. And in this case also the combinations and superpositions are owing, in great part, to political centralization. It is impossible to restore the organic nexus between them, and the Egyptians themselves never attempted it, but preferred to drag this complex idea after them with all its incongruities.

But from these different theories we can deduce the general character; it is the same as that which we recognized in the theory of the gods—profound materialism. Even when the Egyptian raises his eyes to heaven he has the idea that the future fate of the dead must be much like life on earth.

Egypt

As man has found his chief pleasure on earth in satisfying his material needs, he desires the same pleasures in the life beyond. He will try to obtain them with less labour than was necessary on earth—there may possibly be some one to work for him to procure him the means of enjoyment; but the dead man needs above all to live, to eat and to drink. The terrible impossibility of opening his mouth to breathe, of opening his eyes to see, of moving his inert limbs to rise and move about, the horrors of hunger and thirst, these are the things chiefly feared by the Egyptian for his dead, and this has often and extraordinarily convincingly been expressed in literature. The Egyptian regards as the most terrible of horrors, not the ferocious tearing of his body by evil spirits which the Christian fears from devils, but that he should be forced to turn to his own excrement for food and drink. The passing of the boat of the sun in the Tuat, the judgment before the court of Osiris, the life in the blessed fields of heaven, are certainly important, but they are only secondary matters in comparison with the most urgent material needs.

But the dead man not only needs food. Having been placed in the earth, the safety of his body may be endangered: he may be exposed to the bites of ferocious animals, especially of serpents; hence the need of defence against similar perils. And if we read the inscriptions of the pyramids, the most ancient funerary religious documents of Egypt, we find that the essential considerations—those for which written formulæ were furnished to the dead—were that the dead man might come out during the day upon earth and in heaven, that necessary food might never fail him, that he might be preserved from the bites of serpents and that he might satisfactorily complete the voyage towards the regions of the blest.

For the better understanding of this materialism in the funerary idea, we add that the life beyond the grave was not regarded, as in the Greek and other religions, as a continuation

of the life on earth, but was regarded as a new life of more importance than the life on earth, because the latter lasted only a few score years, while the new life was to be for eternity. This explains why the Egyptian took such pains to arrange a suitable dwelling-place for the next life, and when his means allowed it he exerted himself to the utmost to provide himself with a handsome tomb, where nothing should be wanting that would be necessary to him after death.

But the consequence of this was to open a gulf between life and death and to prevent the Egyptian from connecting his past life with the future. The body of the dead man was the same as in life, the Ka was always that which had accompanied him from birth, but the individual who appeared after the reanimation of the body by the Ka was an individual who had a new life before him. Therefore no elements of the past life were mixed in the funerary cult. The dead man must have been good and just, for only so could he obtain admission to the kingdom of the blessed, but once he had obtained this, his past life was a closed episode. Egyptian civilization does not, like Greek culture, love to represent the dead man in some of his favourite occupations on earth; the art which is placed at the service of the funerary cult starts from the moment in which the dead man has ended his earthly life on his deathbed and awaits reanimation that he may begin his life beyond this world. Only when some episode of his life seems of sufficient importance to ensure him good renown among posterity does it find a place among the images which are to make his future life happy.

Works of Art inspired by Religion.

Now that we have outlined the fundamental features of the Egyptian religion both as to the conception of the gods and the funerary idea we must, in order to make clear the connection between this religion and plastic art, first see how and in what degree art has been placed at the service of that religion, and secondly, what

FIG. 17.—THE DEAD MAN BEFORE THE TABLE OF OFFERINGS.

(Coll. Bissing.)

(*Bissing-Bruckmann*, pl. 14.)

[*See page* 95.]

To face p. 92.

FIG. 18.—REAPING.
Sauiet el-Meitin
(*Lepsius*, iv., pl. 106 b.)

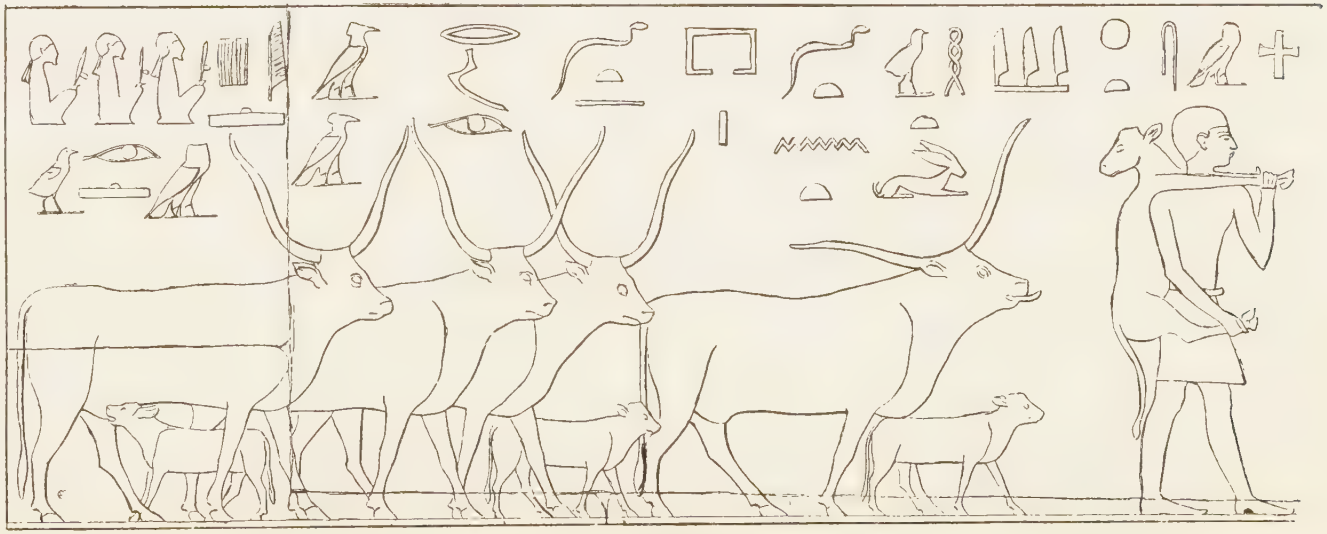

FIG. 19.—CATTLE LED FROM THE PASTURE.

influence religion has had upon the aspect and course of this art.

We will begin upon the field of life. A religion like that of Egypt, which trusted so much in the protection of the gods and had at the same time so materialistic an idea of them, soon comprehended the advantage to be obtained from plastic art. To possess an image of the god was the same as to have at hand the god himself, to be able to ask him directly for whatever there was need of.

And it was useful to have not only an image which would protect the whole community, but an image, however modest, which would specially protect its possessor. And it was well to possess the figure not only of one deity but of all the deities. Hence the extraordinary number of idols, great and small, which form the patrimony of Egyptian art.

Then, that the work of protection should be efficiently exercised, it was advisable to dedicate to them in effigy the persons and animals for whom protection was desired. And hence the no less extraordinary number of votive images by which the idols are accompanied.

But the widest field of the work of plastic art is that of the funerary cult. Art provided the most efficacious means of supplying the dead man with all that it was desired to ensure for him in the life beyond the grave. We must of course understand that the same services were not required of art in every period and every part of Egypt. But, according to the prevalence of one idea or another, through local, historical, or political conditions, certain works of art were more in demand than others. In the same way different social conditions caused, on account of their cost, a greater or less demand for these images. But after we have made full allowance for the influence of special conditions, the fact remains that the funerary cult of Egypt has its fulcrum in plastic art.

This art has a principal share in the preservation of the body. What caused the Egyptians to practise the mummifica-

tion of the dead, which was supposed to have originated in the same process applied to the body of Osiris by Anubis, was the need of preserving the body in order that it might be reanimated by its Ka in the after-life. And in order that this body might appear like the living person and should not be decomposed when in contact with the earth, it was necessary not only to carry out a process of preparation, but also to enclose it in some protecting medium. And this protecting medium was the mummy-case, upon which was a life-sized reproduction of the features of the dead man.

But because it was in the form of a mummy, that is, it represented the defunct in the aspect to which the consequences of death had reduced him, this case was not exactly like the individual when he was alive or exactly as he would be after death. Hence the necessity of making a statue resembling the dead man, or, rather, resembling the Ka of the dead man imagined as a living man. It was perhaps thought that this statue would be reanimated like a second body. But the Egyptian in his scrupulousness feared lest the Ka when he tried to reanimate this statue should on account of some defect or impurity find it unfitted for this use, and depart, perhaps never to return. The dead man would then lose for ever the chance of being called to a new life. And the careful Egyptian avoided this danger by multiplying the number of statues of the dead: the Ka would certainly find one or another suitable for his purpose and would not depart without reanimating the dead man.

Besides the fear lest the body of the dead man should not be reanimated was another not less terrible—the dread lest he should have no food. This food could on certain occasions be offered in kind, but to ensure a supply for all future time in a form in which it would reach the dead man was not possible to the survivors: it was a work that only the gods could perform. But it could be made easier for the gods to perform this favour. It was possible to offer an image of the food that the gods might transform it into reality. And so the Ka of the dead man

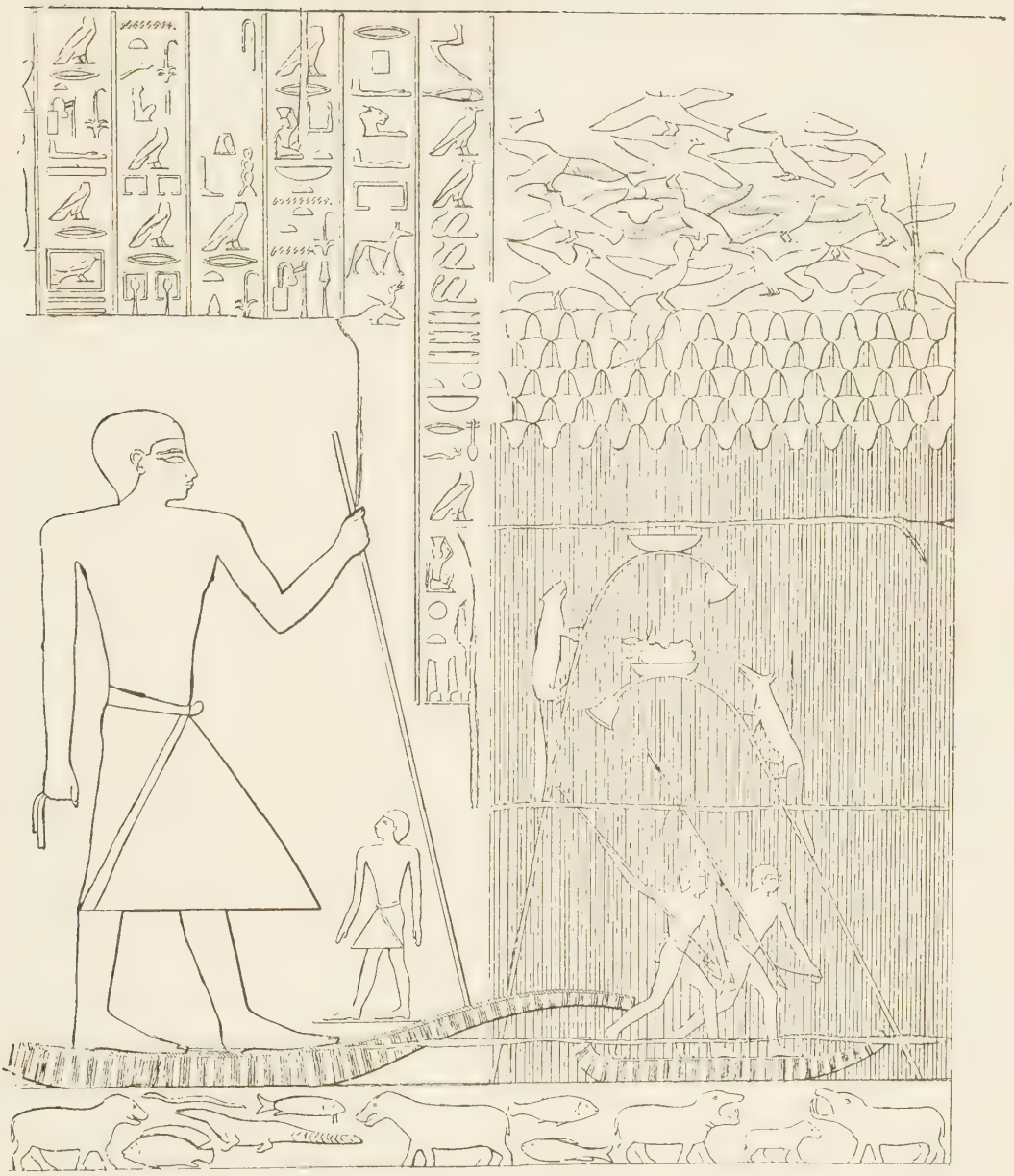

FIG. 20.—HUNTING AMONG THE PAPYRUS.

Gisch.

(*Lepsius*, iii., pl. 77.)

[*See page* 95.]

To face p. 94.

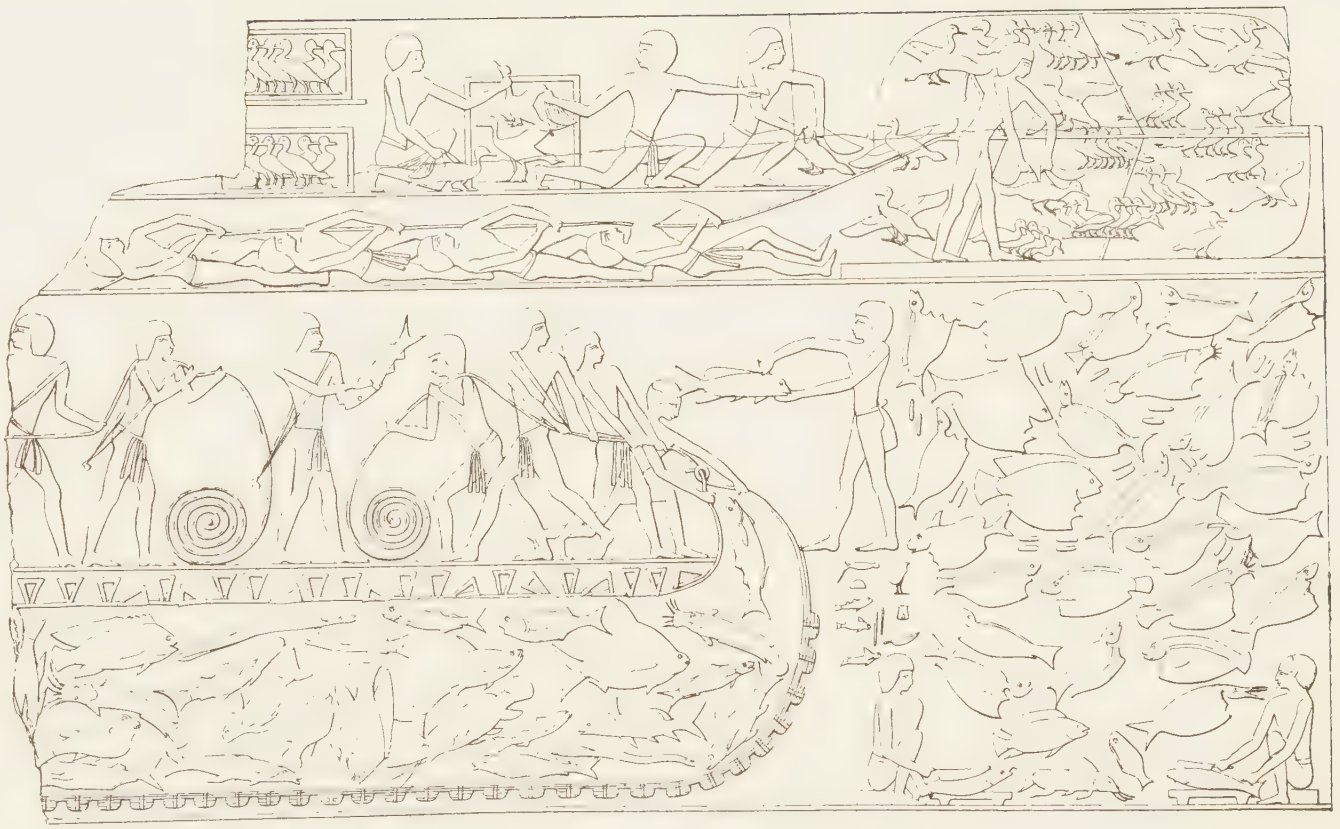

FIG. 21.—FISHING AND TAKING WATERFOWL.

Sakkarah.

(*Lepsius*, iii., pl. 46.)

[*See page* 95.]

was represented on the walls of the tomb, and before him a table heaped with food (Fig. 17).

But now the careful Egyptian felt another doubt: though he had placed hyperbolic signs near the animals and vases, food offered thus might after many centuries be entirely consumed. And then the Egyptian understood that it was possible to ensure the perpetual presence of these offerings by representing not only the sacrifice and offering, but also the preparations which had preceded this final act. For example, if he wished to offer a loaf of bread, he went back to the reaping of the grain in his representation (Fig. 18). If he intended to sacrifice an ox, he went back to the moment in which this ox was led from the pasture (Fig 19). If he wished to provide game and fish for the dead man, he went back to the time when the one was captured in the marshes (Fig. 20) and the other caught in the pond (Fig. 21). And we might quote many more instances. By returning to the making and preparation of the thing offered, the constant renewal of the offering was ensured: it was represented in a continual state of happening which would overcome the passing of ages.

This idea may seem over-subtle, but it is in accordance with the spirit of Egyptian religion and it is a subtlety which has had an immense effect on the course of Egyptian art. This art of Egypt appears to us to consist of stiff and immovable figures, and really does so in many cases, yet in this special department it shows itself as the most full of movement of the human arts. These figures have to be represented as in movement because the reason of their existence lies in movement. And now we understand how Egyptian art got so much real life into its subjects But it did not arrive at this through a passion for genre subjects. Though some features of gross humour have entered into the pictures they were created with a magical object, to ensure food for the dead. Scenes of this kind never entered into the patrimony of Greek art, because it followed quite another path in

funerary ideas and did not stop at this meticulous providing for the dead. If we see in Greek vase paintings the shoemaker's shop, the workshop of the potter and the metal-worker or the oil-seller's shop, these subjects are so rare as to be lost beneath the mass of scenes taken from myth and are in any case only a glance at real life for the pleasure of the artist; they are not scenes of magical import to obtain some benefit from the deity. The donors of the votive tablets at Corinth containing subjects drawn from the life of the furnace and the mine, from seafaring life and from hunting asked for these blessings, but in life, not in death. They show the strong attachment of the lowest stratum of the people to the magical conception even under the dominance of a highly developed religion.

But just because Greek art as a whole has not, like Egyptian art, taken scenes from daily life for magical purposes, it has produced what is entirely absent from Egyptian art: scenes of genre, scenes taken from real life not for any practical purpose, but for their expressive character.

And what we have said of the figure decoration on the walls of the tomb is applicable to all the statuettes and all the groups in woodcarving or stone which were placed in the interior of the tomb. The soldiers, the boatmen, the woman grinding corn (Fig. 22), the woman kneading (Fig. 23), the bearer of offerings (Fig. 24), all the figures in action or at their trade which are now admired as masterpieces of Egyptian art for their naturalistic tendency and their feeling for reality—all these figures were created solely for the use of the dead, to serve for the performance of a magic spell.

But the needs of the dead were not all appeased by the provision of food. The dead man had to make a long journey before he arrived at his destined place in heaven or in the underworld, and for every part of this journey art could help him. Hence the large number of figures and symbolic objects placed in the tomb. There was the ladder to climb up to

FIG. 22.—WOMAN GRINDING CORN.

Figure of wood. (Museo Archeologico, Florence.)

(Photo Brogi.)

FIG. 24.—BEARER OF OFFERINGS.

Figure of wood. (Louvre.)

(Photo Alinari.)

FIG. 23.—WOMAN KNEADING BREAD.

Figure of wood. (Museo Archeologico, Florence.)

(Photo Brogi.) [*See page* 96.]

To face p. 96.

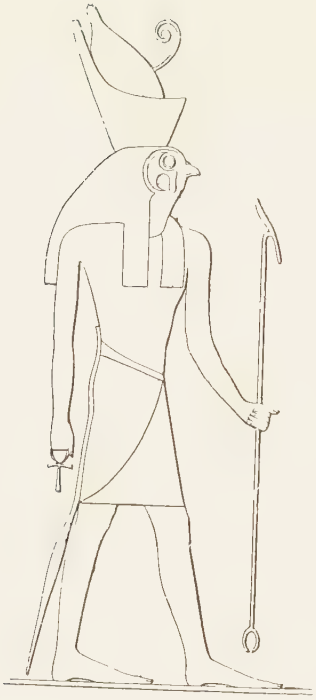

FIG. 25.—HORUS.

(Amada.)

(*Lepsius*, v., pl. 45 d.)

FIG. 26.—THOTH.

(Sebûa.)

(*Lepsius*, vii., pl. 182 f.)

FIG. 27.—SET.

(Karnak.)

(*Lepsius*, vi., pl. 124 d.)

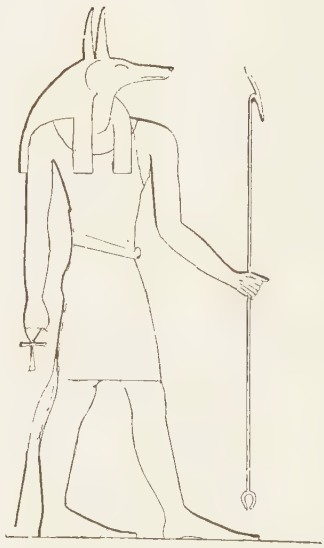

FIG. 28.—ANUBIS.

(Surarîeh.)

(*Lepsius*, vii., pl. 198 e.)

[*See page* 100.]

FIG. 29.—KHNEMU.

(Tura.)

(*Lepsius*, v., pl. 71 a.)

FIG. 30.—SEBEK.

(Karnak.)

(*Lepsius*, vi., pl. 125 c.)

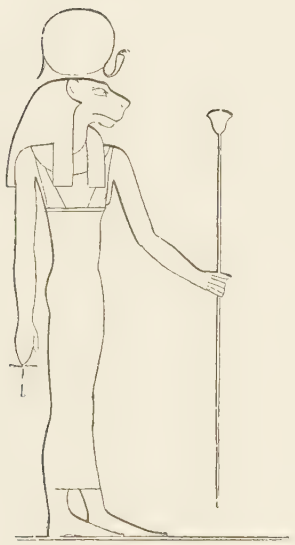

FIG. 31.—SEKHET.

(Silsilis.)

(*Lepsius*, vii., pl. 201 d.)

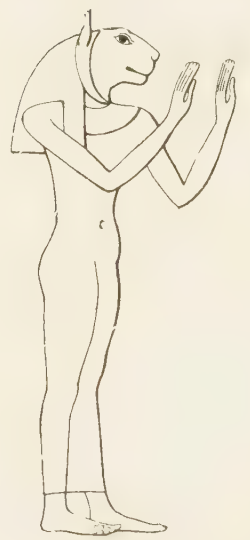

FIG. 32.—BAST.

(Edfu.)

(*Rosellini*, "*Mon. d. Culto*," pl. 44.)

[*See page* 100.]

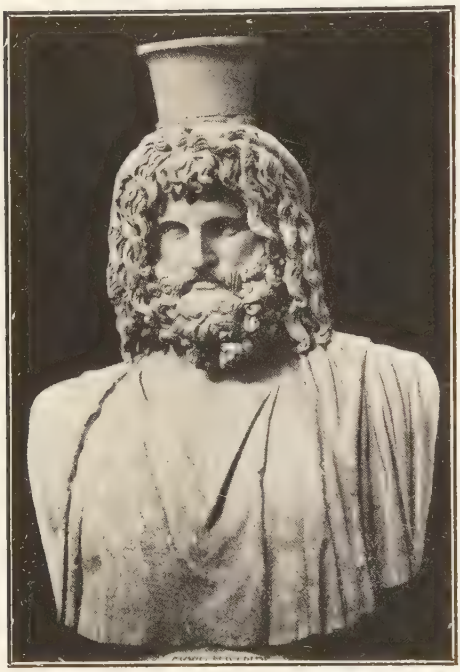

FIG. 33.—SERAPIS.

(Vatican.)

(Photo Alinari.)

FIG. 34.—ISIS AND HORUS.

(Louvre.)

(Photo Alinari.)

[*See pages* 111, 112.]

heaven by, the boat for crossing the vault of heaven, ivories with incised figures to protect him against serpents and scorpions; there was the pyramid from which the dead man would see the sun at sunrise and sunset; there was the small plaque in the form of a temple, with the image of the dead man praying to the sun-god, or with the figures of the gods of the dead; there was the pillar or "Tet" of Osiris, the girdle of Isis, the image of the rising sun, the divine eye or Utchat, the scarab as an image of the sun, the heart that it might not betray him at his confession before the judges, and a number of other figures, often of popular gods, such as Bes, Thoueris, Onuris, the *pataikoi* —who had the task of protecting the dead from all danger, of making sure his life beyond this earth, and of making it happy for him.

In order to make clear the extent to which Egyptian religion relied on plastic art for the protection of the dead and how it regarded these figures as something real, it will suffice to quote the characteristic instance of the "ushabtiu." The "ushabtiu" were small mummy-shaped figures whose task was to take the place of the dead man in the agricultural work of the world beyond the grave.* The Egyptians, being an agricultural people, imagined the home of the blest as irrigated and fertile fields like those on earth. The work of these fields had to be done, but this work did not seem suitable for persons of high position, hence the need for a substitute. The "ushabtiu" acted as substitutes, and the number of them placed in the tomb was often counted by hundreds.

And in time the image became so important that it was considered a necessary help and a comment on the written word. The pyramids of Saqqarah (V–VI dynasty), where the most ancient funerary texts are preserved, are absolutely unprovided with figures. But if we follow the records from the Ancient to the Middle Kingdom and from the Middle to the New Kingdom, we find that the idea of the journey beyond the grave assumes

* A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 159 ff.

an importance equal to, if not greater than, the provision of food, and copies either of the whole or extracts from the writings which promised the reanimation of the body and its happy entrance into the kingdom of the dead were deposited beside the dead man, or were used to decorate the inside and outside of the mummy-case and sarcophagus. But in time the written word no longer sufficed: images must increase its efficacy. And so the *Book of the Dead*, the *Book of the Two Ways*, the *Book of what is in the Tuat*, the *Book of Gates*, the *Book of Funerals* become illustrated books.

I have certainly not recorded all the monuments of Egyptian art; but if we omit from the field of the art which is termed historic, and which we might more correctly call the art of the chronicler, that form of art whose object was to record the glorious deeds of the Pharaoh or remarkable events in the life of certain citizens, the art which at the bottom contained that same principle of thought for the future which is characteristic of religious art—we may say that all the products of Egyptian art, however immense its extent may be, are included in one of the categories mentioned. It is always a question of idols and votive images in the broadest sense, intended for the protection of life and death—in fact, it is an art with a magical intention.

Direction given to the Representation of the Gods.

Now that we have examined how and to what extent plastic art is at the service of this religious idea, we shall see in what direction it has necessarily been impelled, what barriers have limited its path, in a word, what aspect it has had to assume when in contact with reality. The influence of soil, climate, race, the circumstances of the historic moment, may explain some light and shadow of this art, but its essential and lasting character can only be explained by the special inspiration which came to it from the religious concept.

Egypt

We will begin with the figure of the divinity.* We have seen how the Egyptian gods were mostly gods with the head of a beast. It is commonly suggested that uncivilized and primitive races have some skill in the representation of animals. This skill may depend on the fact that man originally lived much in contact with animals, as on them depended his well-being and his danger. Whether he has to hunt them or to defend himself against them, man is obliged to watch them and to become acquainted with their form and movements. This knowledge is then produced by the exigencies of life, not a voluntary preference.

But with all their acuteness of observation these forms of art which represent animals, represent not the individual animal but the typical animal—that which is essential in the figure, not that which is peculiar to it; and even in the representation of the human figure the individualization is owing only to slow progress, but the individualization of animal figures is a far more difficult thing. Specially difficult because the individuality is less accentuated in animals than in men, in the same way that with regard to the human type it is less accentuated in uncivilized than in civilized peoples. Individuality is more easily perceived in the human countenance, and human faces are more varied with the greater degree of civilization, and the secret psychic differentiation is more plainly reflected in the face. It is the more difficult because what really interests us in the animal is the type and not the individual, and when primitive people, on account of the necessary conditions of life, turn their attention to animals, they seize on the typical features, not the individual traits.

We see at once what necessarily happened in the case of Egyptian art with regard to the representation of its gods. By representing them in animal form or as men

* R. V. Lanzone, *Dizionario di mitologia egizia*, Torino, 1881; E. A. W. Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, London, 1904.

with beasts' heads, Egyptian art does not show the human countenance, in which individuality appears most clearly. But the gods tend to individuality: God is individual. Between this tendency and the obstacle presented by the beast-form the individual character of the figure of the deity has been sacrificed.

Egypt possesses typical gods, not individual gods. This religion has not the god Horus but the hawk-headed god, the hawk-god (Fig. 25); it has not the god Thoth, but the ibis-headed god, the ibis-god (Fig. 26). Among the principal gods Set is the god with a head which appears to be that of an ass (Fig. 27), Anubis is the jackal-god (Fig. 28), Khnemu is the ram-god (Fig. 29), Sebek is the crocodile-god (Fig. 30), Hathor is the cow-goddess (Fig. 12), Sekhet is the lioness-goddess (Fig. 31), Bast is the cat-goddess (Fig. 32). The consequence of this is that the Egyptian artist, instead of trying to give the individual character of the deity he has to represent, remains within the limits of the type, and thus the figures of the Egyptian gods in the decline of this civilization are just the same as they were in the beginning. This persistence of the god as a typical figure is continued also in the case of the figures of the gods with human heads: hence the monotonous appearance of the whole Egyptian pantheon. To understand how Egyptian art lacks one of the forces which go to perfect artistic forms, we may compare those forms of art which start from the typical god and have during the course of many generations transformed these gods into individual gods. The art of Greece, for example, was able in a relatively short time to create the Zeus of Phidias and the Zeus of Otricoli, the Aphrodite of Alkamenes and the Aphrodite of Praxiteles. And we cannot say that Egyptian art had not equal ability in individualization with that to which Greek art had attained, for its great skill in characterization is shown by its portraits of human beings.

Let us add that the individualization of a god is sought by the believer, and therefore by the artist, when this god no longer appears as a protector only, but as a being in whom the human race is reflected with its characteristics—when the god has been humanized. But this humanization was ignored by the Egyptian religion even in the case of completely human gods: these gods being regarded above all as omnipotent protectors, they were always imagined as beings different from men, who therefore would not be brought nearer to man by being individualized.

Another important reason for this stopping short of Egyptian divinities within the circle of the typical deity was that this art, obeying the spirit of materialization peculiar to its whole religious concept, had begun to overload its gods with attributes. For the Egyptians everything could be represented by a figure. The sun and the dominion over Upper and Lower Egypt are, for example, facts which are made evident in art by the ureated solar disc or the high white crown and the low red crown. Abstract ideas are easily rendered by concrete forms: the concepts of dominion and justice were rendered by figures of material objects, the crook, the whip, or the ostrich feather. Egyptian divinity thus became a sort of written page on which it was easy to read by means of the attributes, the characteristics of the gods and their sentiments with regard to men. The Greek artist strives by careful modelling to let the worshipper see majesty and benevolence in the face of his Zeus; the Christian artist will cause love and self-sacrifice for man to show in the face of the Redeemer; the Egyptian artist shows similar sentiments in his figures of Amen and Osiris, but only by the addition of some attribute.

Besides the arrest of the Egyptian divinities within the circle of the typical divinity, a second reason has contributed to make their appearance fixed and unchangeable—the want

of a mythology. The little mythology possessed by Egypt was essentially based on natural phenomena which do not lend themselves easily to representation in plastic art. It is generally a case of representation without action, such as that of Nut, the heavens, in the form of a cow or of a woman held up by Shu that she may not fall upon Keb, or it is a representation in which the action is periodic and monotonous. There are no commemorative actions in which the human element predominates. There was one single myth in which the human element predominates—that of Osiris, Isis, and Horus; but even this did not excite the fancy of the artists, possibly because even in this case the interest was not in the commemorative element, but in the rite, the same rite which must be performed for every dead man. The artist did not regard this fact as a moving scene to be rendered with expression, as in the Greek tradition of the myth; he only saw in it a composition intended to protect the dead man. For the artist Osiris was not so much the good prince, the faithful spouse, the betrayed brother, the avenged father: he was the first to die, the being with whom every dead man was identified. In the inscriptions of the pyramids this is shown to be his characteristic. The human side of the myth, at least in the details, might be a later reflection of his character, or it has been taken into account at a late period, when his figure, even more rigid than that of the other gods, had already been fixed in plastic art.

And still more fatal to Egyptian art than the want of a divine mythology was the want of a heroic mythology. The heroes are a connecting link between gods and men; they help the gradual humanization of the gods, draw them from heaven to earth, and involve them in their actions.

The want of a mythology has had this consequence, that the god, except in a few cases—those of the funerary books, in which he takes part in actions affecting man, though in ritual attitude—is always represented as immovable and inert.

Egypt

The Egyptian gods are rigid, not because religion imposes this, but because religion had no power to inspire an attempt at movement, and had in itself no power of action. The statues of the gods in Greek art also appear inert in the early period, but an apparent or presupposed participation by them in an action has gradually released them from this rigidity. A statue of the Apollo type of the sixth century B.C. has no reason to envy an Egyptian god; indeed, their resemblance in appearance and position has suggested that the Greek type might be derived from an Egyptian type, but an Apollo of the fourth or third century B.C., bending down or advancing and sounding the lyre, and accompanying this action with the movement of his body, has no parallel in any Egyptian work. But this Egyptian art had in its religious concept no object in disturbing the rigid aspect of its gods. And the immobility of the figures has necessarily in some degree held back the artist from study of the human body, especially in all that is connected with movement, and has had considerable influence upon the form of the figures themselves.

If we pass from plastic art used to represent the gods to plastic art used in the service of the funerary conception, we find these same characteristics in the image of the dead, but we have a strong contrast in the statuary groups or painted and carved scenes which were created to assure to the defunct his life beyond this earth.

Impulse given to Funerary Art.

Except in the scenes in which the dead man has to perform the journey beyond the grave and go to his judgment before the gods of the lower regions, where movement is confined to walking or being guided or carried, the dead man is represented as immovable. He is seated before a table of offerings, or he stands there leaning on his stick and taking part in the ceremonies. His immobility impresses us in the

same way as the immobility of the gods. Like the gods he has no history. Death has broken all the links with his past life, his earthly life, and has caused a man to arise to whom it is of the first importance not to lack the useful and necessary things for this new life and who remains immovable since others are moving and providing for him. Occasionally some important event in the past life of the dead man is represented, but this is an exception in view of the generally accepted idea of his immovability.

But his future life is to be similar to his past life and to offer all that his past life has offered, and must therefore have movement: if the dead man is immovable, others must move and work for him. Hence the action with which all the funerary groups in wood or stone and all the scenes on the walls of the tombs are animated. The soldiers, boatmen, kneaders of bread, brewers of beer, bearers of offerings—to record the most characteristic of the funerary groups—are only figures in motion. The hunting and fishing scenes, the pastoral scenes, scenes of agriculture or industry, to mention the most frequent among these figures on the walls, are all scenes of movement.

This contrast of the scenes drawn from life and the immovable figures of the gods, of the princes and of the dead, whether in statuary, sculpture relief or painting, have given rise to a distinction between art of the court and popular art, an art limited by conventional tradition and an art open to all the inspiration of nature.

This distinction is not a correct one. There are really two tendencies in every art, that which tends to preserve traditional forms and that which pushes forward continually to bring these forms nearer to nature; but this is not the congenital dualism which causes so great a difference between the works attributed to the court art and the works attributed to popular art. The only difference which separates them is that the supposed popular art represents figures in action and

the so-called court art represents inaction: but the action and the inaction are in both cases inspired by the same religious concept.

The funeral groups and the scenes on the walls of the tombs show figures in the movements characteristic of their function and of their trade, because their action is to ensure benefit to the dead. If these figures ceased working, the magic task assigned to them would fail and they would lose the object of their existence.

The gods, on the other hand, must be represented as immovable because they have no action to carry on: their presence is sufficient to ensure their protection. The same thing may be said of the princes, who are regarded as the depositaries of the divine authority on earth. When they are not engaged in violent action in battle or other event recorded in their own lives, when they are only kings from whom help is expected, they assume the same rigid pose as the gods. The same may be said of the dead when they are immovable witnesses of a terrible piece of work carried out for them by thousands of slaves.

We should then rather distinguish art of inaction and art of action. Inactive, inert are the gods, the kings, the dead, when they are imagined as independent persons and protect their worshippers by their presence or accept the gifts of their devotees. On the other hand, all those who approach the gods and the kings to bring offerings and to obtain their protection or who provide food for the dead by their labour, are active and hardworking.

From the fact that in the works of the court style and in the popular style of art the construction of the figures is the same, we may assume that it is not a case of two opposite currents of art having different means of expression, but that they are similar products of one and the same religious concept. Whether in statuary, relief or painting the figures are constructed with the juxtaposition of parallel views; in a word

these forms of art lack a perfect naturalism and the oblique planes which must have been suggested to a popular form of art by a profounder study of nature.

We must not exaggerate the value of this action, this movement which we have regarded as characteristic of popular art. The attitudes of Egyptian figures in motion display the greatest monotony: complete statistics of all the works of this class would show a very small number of types. The want of variety in these movements may be attributed to the limiting of parallelism in the views, for the necessity of extending the movement in one plane in a painting or relief or in two adjacent planes in the case of statuary was equivalent to diminishing the number of representable movements, but on the other hand it may be asserted that the limits of parallelism have not been broken through because Egyptian art did not feel the need of reproducing these movements with greater naturalness, that is, in their complete extent. In effect the artists did not trouble about expressiveness and quickness of movement, but only about the effect of these. Once the essential subjects which sufficed for the magic intention were fixed, Egyptian art reproduced them in a stereotyped fashion, without seeking to modify them in accordance with nature.

It is a mistake to think that art can be led to study and reproduce the human body simply because it is constantly standing in nudity before it. It is not true that the Greeks were able to fix its forms with such force and grace because they were accustomed to see day by day the naked bodies of the athletes in the palæstra. If any people ought to have had a familiar knowledge of the nude it was the Egyptians. On account of the climate they were obliged to wear only a short garment, and of necessity displayed in the fields and workshops the strength and agility of their limbs. Nevertheless Egyptian art appears awkward or at least unfinished in its drawing of form, while the Greeks, who only saw the body completely nude on certain fixed occasions, that is, during the

exercises of the palæstra, and the Italians of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, who on account of their religion and style of dress had not even these opportunities and had to study the nude from models, have created incomparable masterpieces. This skill is not produced by daily contact, for what is seen every day often passes unobserved; it is produced by the inspiration of art which obliges certain special forms in nature to be intentionally studied. Greece and Italy had humanized their gods and therefore had to seek out for them the forms which appeared most perfect. Egypt on the other hand saw in her gods not men of noble aspect, but protectors in human form, and knew that their protective force lay in the fact of their existence, in their presence, not in the greater or less degree of their beauty.

A careful study of the scenes of action, as well as of the immovable statues of the gods, throws more light on the essential characteristic of Egyptian art—its magical character. But in no branch of this art is it easier to recognize this characteristic than in that production which is one of its chief glories—the portrait. How is it that Egyptian art which was unable to give individual character to its gods, and has given them faces devoid of expression—this art which during the course of some thousands of years has taken so little count of the structure of the human body as always to represent it in the same aspect, has been able to concentrate its whole power on the reproduction of the face so as to produce masterpieces like the "Village Mayor," the statues of Amenemhat III, of Rameses II, the figures of Amen-hetep IV? But—and this is important—the Egyptian portrait is not, like the Greek, a portrait which from being idealistic becomes realistic in its gradual approach to nature, it is not the product of an internal development of art, of that development of individualization which brings about a slow advance from the type to the individual. The Egyptian portrait is neither idealistic nor realistic in tendency, it simply tries to be—in proportion to

the artistic means at its service—a faithful portrait which will leave no doubt as to the identification of the original, but does not lose itself in the reproduction of every detail. And, what is most remarkable, this portrait will in the time of the Ancient Kingdom present a certain character and will preserve it exactly the same, except for some increase of academical flavour and virtuosity, all through the Saïte and the Greek periods. The reason of this is that the Egyptian portrait was a necessity of the religious conception, which having always remained the same, has given the same character to the portrait. In other words, the Egyptian portrait is not due to the course of artistic evolution, it has been superimposed upon art.

Egyptian art had to produce some statues which might be reanimated by the Ka of the dead man. But if these statues were not like the living man the Ka would not have recognized them, and instead of reanimating them would have left them for ever. Art perceived this danger and for that reason greater pains were taken to produce a faithful portrait. Thus this skill in portraiture, which at first seems incomprehensible in view of the stereotyped, monotonous and unnatural art of the Egyptians, appears quite in place and bears additional testimony to the strong influence of religious inspiration.

We have recognized in Egyptian art a form of art possessing an essentially magic quality, that is, a protective quality, and we now see in a true light many of its characteristics which seemed incomprehensible on a superficial comparison with other forms of art, when these forms had passed beyond this idea and this function.

First of all it is explained how Egyptian art is an art which develops round one dominant figure. Be this the god, the prince, or the dead man, it will dominate the scene, generally larger in proportion than the rest. All that is in the picture is represented, not for the spectator outside, but for this principal figure, just because everything is for his service.

In Egyptian art we should look in vain for scenes without this dominant figure, scenes intended for some one outside of the picture, for example, an Amazonomachia, a Taking of Troy, such as those which formed the decoration of Greek monuments.

In the second place the great abundance of its monuments depends upon this magic function. This form of art, especially funeral art, is not for the benefit of every one, it is individual. Every individual requires his supply of images, because what serves for one man cannot serve for another, But every individual must have as many images as possible. It is, in fact, a common thing in a case of magical practices to be never sure of having sufficient means of protection and therefore to have an inclination to multiply these objects. And the result is that the walls of the temples and of the funereal chambers, of the sarcophagi, and of the mummy-cases are entirely covered with representations of figures. And the objects which form the moveable outfit are numbered by hundreds. In this *horror vacui*, in this swarm of monuments, Egyptian art shows itself as protective rather than decorative, for a decorative art such as the Greek limits itself to covering some parts only of the walls. Here we have also the explanation of why Egyptian art is an art of the interior, a hidden art, produced only for the possessor, and why Greek art is on the other hand an external art, produced for the spectator.

The magic scope of Egyptian art explains, too, why the artist disappears behind it; the same person in Greek art makes himself known by putting his signature even to the modest vase painting. The artist here had no reason to sign his work, for when the work of art left his hands there was no longer any connection between him and the work, while there was one between the work of art and its possessor, a protective relation in which the artist would have been an intruder.

After what we have laid down it will not seem paradoxical to say that the Egyptian nation was the greatest of uncivilized peoples. In plastic art they have certainly carried to the extreme that principle which is at the root of the religious concept of all uncivilized peoples, the principle of the magical scope in art. They may have done better than these other peoples but they have not done more. They could not do what the Greeks could, modify the primitive character of plastic art and from being protective make it commemorative and representative. We see that there is nothing to attract in these works, nothing in sympathy with our feelings, but this is possibly because the works were not intended to be looked at by strangers. We may acknowledge their merit in some special direction and may be moved by this vast religious concept, or we may after careful study admire this art from the point of view of erudition, but we can never feel it.

Isolation of Egyptian Religion.

And this is not an individual impression ; the position occupied in the history of civilization by this religion and this art is actually reflected there. Egyptian religion and art have had no influence on the development of modern civilization. Modern civilization, the result of such varied elements as Greek, Roman, Semitic, and Germanic, owes nothing to Egyptian civilization, in spite of its having for many thousand years held an advanced position in the Mediterranean basin.

And what has been said with regard to modern civilization may also be said of ancient civilization. Greek and Roman civilization came successively in contact with Egyptian civilization through the dominion which they exercised over the country, and as they drew provisions from the country they drew also from her natural features the inspiration for some of their works of art ; but at the bottom these forms of civilization remain alien to one another. And nowhere can this be so clearly seen as in the field of religion and art.

The religions of Greece and of Egypt felt when they met

that no understanding was possible between them. They were too far apart from one another. The Egyptian religion had remained a religion of magic which subordinated everything to the protection exercised by the gods, a protection which might be obtained or favoured by means of art. Greek religion had become a religion of mythical and commemorative content, which recurred to art not to ask help but to show how great and fine were the deeds of the gods and heroes. It was just the difference of inspiration received by art from the two different religious conceptions which caused the art of Egypt to be arrested at the stage of a mechanical reproduction of types and motives, in which the want of feeling for nature was counterbalanced only by a certain hieratic solemnity, while Greece had gradually humanized her gods and made them ideals of physical and moral beauty.

There was, therefore, no neutral ground on which the two types of religion and art could meet. At the most they could exchange attributes or external elements, or could attempt an outward reconciliation by identifying the gods of the two nations and combining their names, but the two types of religion and art remained in essence absolutely distinct.

The clearest proof of the impossibility of unifying these religions is seen in the creation of the type of Serapis (Fig. 33), the only god who might at first be taken as a product of the meeting of the two religions. In this god, who was for the Greeks a form of Hades and for the Egyptians a form of Osiris, that is, in both cases a god of the underworld, the Ptolemies for political reasons attempted to create a religious bond between the two peoples subject to their rule, the Greeks and the Egyptians. But it is a union of elements which do not blend, for at the most the Greek form serves to clothe an Egyptian idea. Besides, it is doubtful if the Egyptians recognized in Serapis their Asar-Hap; it is quite possible that in popular tradition he is a Greek

divinity accepted by the Egyptianized Greeks, whose name is the only thing about him that is Egyptian.

We must not omit to record the great popularity enjoyed during the Alexandrine and Roman periods by the cult of Isis and Horus, the mother and child (Fig. 34). The diffusion of this cult would seem to contradict what we have said, that is, that Egyptian civilization had no influence on the development of ancient civilization and consequently none on modern civilization. The truth is that the cult of Isis and Horus, of the loving mother who through a thousand hardships preserves her little son one day to avenge his father, filled a void in the Greek and Roman religions. In these religions the mirror of the human family as symbolized by the group of father, mother and child was lacking. The gods of Greece are all men and women who love or hate one another, help each other or quarrel, but can never pour out their affection on the head of a smaller divine being who needs their protection. This Egyptian cult without entering into the Greek and Roman religions took its place beside them. But when there arose a new religion, Christianity, whose force lay in the group of the family, the cult of Isis and Horus decayed, being overcome by a superior conception. It had prepared the path but fell half way.

Egyptian Architecture.

We could not have asserted that the influence of the religious conception upon the plastic art of Egypt was such as we have described had we not been able to prove that it exercised a similar influence on the other elements of civilization.

If we consider the structural features we see that this influence has been small in architecture. The inclination of the walls of the houses and therefore of the tombs and mastabas has certainly been determined by the resistance to be opposed to the inundations of the Nile. Even the Pyramids, those huge funereal monuments against which the floods of the Nile

could have no effect, owe their form to the persistent tradition of sloping walls. So too the tomb and the temple, as has nearly always been the case in the history of architecture, generally repeat the plan of the house. The great turreted pylons of the temples recall a strong element of defence in the dwellings of man. And the Egyptian architect has taken the idea of his columns and his palm, papyrus or lotus capitals from surrounding nature.

But in course of time the religious conception has impressed its seal upon many of the elements of this architecture and, first and foremost, its general character—the impressive grandeur of the pile—becomes more and more accentuated with the lapse of centuries and is entirely dependent upon this religious conception. The scantiness of undoubted remains of the period of the Ancient and of the Middle Kingdom prevents us from following the development of the Egyptian temple, but when it appears under the New Kingdom complete in its plan and structure, its gigantic size above all attracts our wonder and admiration. Now this passion for the colossal in architecture arises from that same mental attitude which induced the Egyptian sculptor to construct enormous statues of the gods and of the Pharaohs, or the Egyptian painter to represent the god, the prince or the defunct as greater in size than the other figures. This is a magical preoccupation. As the god is greater than the other figures, by so much is his dominion the greater, and as his temple is greater than others, by so much is his protection the greater for the faithful who assemble there. A latent principle in all religions is this. And by it were the Greeks urged to create the colossal statues of the Olympian Zeus and of Athene Parthenos, and which, under Eastern influence indeed, induced the Romans to flatter their deified Emperor by the erection of statues of gigantic size.

And that this passion for a grandiose pile was equivalent to a multiplication of the proportions of magic inspiration is made clear by the funerary architecture. Witness the monu-

ments of greatest antiquity—the pyramids—those kingly tombs which were to be as great as the greatness of the kings; and from the Ancient to the New Kingdom the mastabas and the tombs of private persons show the constant accentuation of this idea. Not only are the proportions of these tombs increased when financial conditions cause no limitation, but the number of the chambers in them is extraordinarily increased, as if it were impossible to provide space enough for the accommodation of the defunct.

But besides the hugeness of the pile there is another general characteristic of Egyptian architecture which has been determined by the religious conception. It is a closed-in architecture of which the construction can be understood from the inside and not from outside. Walls almost devoid of divisions or ornament surround the building as if to hide it from profane eyes. From the outside the mastaba appears like a rough bank of masonry; in the pyramid the sepulchral chamber is, as it were, buried in the interior and is almost inaccessible; the high surrounding walls of the temples give the idea of a fortress. One must enter the mastaba, the pyramid, or the temple to comprehend its construction and wonder at the numerous suites of chambers, the long corridors, the vestibules, the halls and the porticoes. How different from the religious buildings of Greece, especially the temple, whose architecture is visible to all and consists rather of external than internal elements! The Greek architect has drawn round the cella the agile dance of the columns for the joy of all who behold it, while the Egyptian architect has crowded them within the enclosing walls. So, too, the Greek artist has disposed his simple funeral monuments on the edge of the sacred way, a constant admonition and a call on each wayfarer for sympathy, while the Egyptian artist has jealously concealed the most magnificent sepulchral constructions beneath the earth and between thick walls. Now, this closing-in characteristic of Egyptian architecture is due to one of the elements of the magic conception

—secrecy. If religious functions were to be profitable they must be protected from profane eyes. The religious architecture of Egypt is therefore enclosed, and the plan is designed so that the full view shall be presented to those only who have the right of entrance, and this care for secrecy culminates with the presence, in the most hidden part of the tomb or temple, of a sacred enclosure accessible only to a few persons or entirely closed. So in the mastaba there was the "serdab," a small chamber for the statue which was to be inhabited by the Ka of the defunct, and this was either completely walled in or communicated with the rest of the edifice only by an aperture a few centimetres in size for the entrance of the smoke or perfume of the offerings. In the same way, in the temple, the most sacred part was reached by passing through courts and porticoes to a small dark chamber which contained the statue of the god and where only the chief priest and the king might enter. The disposition of the whole temple in the direction of its length, through which one passed by degrees through tall broad buildings to narrow and low constructions, from the dazzling light of the first corridor to the darkness of the innermost sanctuary, may be another proof that the religious conception had some influence upon the size and arrangement of a building.

But we recognize this influence of the religious conception upon architecture more clearly in the decoration. We have already observed that the walls of the temples and funeral chambers are completely covered with figures. And not only the walls: the architraves, the columns, every small free space is buried under this decoration. The first effect of this practice is that to the eye of the spectator the architectural elements almost seem to lose their structural function and appear reduced to the humble position of surfaces to be decorated. The walls, architraves and columns act no longer as supporting parts of the architectural whole, but seem only intended to bear the figures. Hence the lack of complete concordance between the

architecture and the decoration which has always been a feature of Egyptian art. The reason of this is that architecture and decoration did not arise together in Egypt, but the decoration was, as it were, a leprosy which invaded and corrupted the whole architectural superficies.

Not only this general application of the Egyptian architectural decoration to the whole of the free surfaces, but also its limitation to the interior of the buildings, reveals the magic origin of this decoration. There is neither sign nor figure on the outside of mastaba or pyramid. Few figures and few statues upon the façade of a temple: but the chambers, the cella, the internal porticoes are all, from floor to ceiling, and even on the ceiling space, swarming with figure scenes. No doubt that same principle of secrecy which had influenced the arrangement and plan of the buildings is responsible for this almost exclusively internal decoration.

If, in addition to all this, we indicate certain points which owe their origin entirely to religious ideas—for instance, the false door in the tomb by which the dead man is supposed to come out so as to be present when offerings are made by his family, and the capitals in the form of the head of Hathor in the temples—we shall have given sufficient proof that architecture does not escape the influence of a religious conception.

Egyptian Literature.

But it is in literature that we find a religious influence equal to that which regulated the course of plastic art. We made out that the Egyptian people had a materialistic conception of life and death, and that they were chiefly preoccupied with the present and the future; in a word, they lacked the historic sense. It is, in fact, natural that a magical theory of life should be the opposite of a historical conception. As long as a people exerts all its strength in trying to guide the forces of nature to satisfy its present and future needs on earth, till it comes to imagine death as a continuation

of this life, in which there will exist the same needs which will have to be provided for with scrupulous care, this people will have neither time nor wish to turn back and look at the past. To look back at the past means to concern oneself with the affairs of others. The idea that history is the teacher of life and that its records should be collected and studied as a help and a guide to our future actions is a falsification of the historic sense; it is to turn to a professedly practical scope the thing that should be a joy, the extension of the horizon of life by the knowledge of the past. A people creates or keeps records of its mythology or history, not that it may learn how to live, but because, now that its future is made safe, it may take less thought for the future and use its superfluous energy in the conquest of the past. The feeling for history rises and spreads when the feeling for magic is weakened or gone, when man need no longer wear out his force in compelling nature, and when, instead of regulating what is to happen in the future, he loves to contemplate what has happened in the past.

Egyptian civilization, impregnated with magic as it was, naturally lacked this historic sense. If we glance at her literature we can easily understand it. This people wrote beyond all measure. The number of its inscribed monuments exceeds that of any other people. But in this the Egyptians were dominated by the same principle which led them to multiply their works of plastic art. They were never sure of having sufficiently provided for their own fate or that of others depending on them, and therefore hoped that the written word repeated ten times would have tenfold force. The walls of the temples, of the tombs, of the mummy-cases and of the sarcophagi display not only an orgy of sculptured or painted figures but also an orgy of inscription. And the funeral books deposited in the tombs increase this number further. What a difference from the Greeks, who sent their dead to their destiny beyond this world with a simple "Hegeso daughter of Proxenos"!

And when we have reduced to its true proportions this literature which seems so immense because of its repetitions, what does it consist of? Chiefly of religious texts, works of magic and medical works, all things of practical use to the reader or even to the owner. As for love poetry, stories, histories of adventure, anything that is not useful and magical but for amusement and instruction, there is little enough to be found. And when we read the *Adventures of Sa-Nehat* or the *Tale of the Two Brothers*, we shall see what a poor thing is this narrative literature. Puerile, prolix, colourless, it contains few gems indeed. There is something greater in a single canto of Homer, in a single tragedy of Æschylus or in one single hymn of Pindar, than in the whole literature of Egypt. And this because the Egyptian can neither relate nor give colour to what he relates; he can suggest precepts, enumerate remedies, formulate hymns and prayers, can in fact be magical, but not mythical or historical. Compare, for example, a Homeric hymn, in which the hymn is only a pretext for a description of the god and of the greatness of his past deeds, with an Egyptian hymn to Amen-Ra, which is all an invocation for help and fear lest this help should fail, and we shall perceive the different fashion in which the two religious concepts are reflected in literature.

We understand now how Egypt lacks a historical literature. What it did was to chronicle facts and fix contemporary events that they might be remembered in the future, not search out and reconstruct past events that their memory might give pleasure in the present time. The Pharaohs and the officers of state sometimes left records of their deeds on the walls of the temples and tombs, but none of them troubled to describe or record the deeds of their forefathers. This nation scarcely felt the need to rewrite the list of their kings, and that was possibly not done with a historical object. The first history of Egypt, by Manetho, was not written till the Greek period, and we understand how it was so dry and

deficient in information, when we remember that it was a foreign fruit in the field of Egyptian civilization.

The deciphering of Egyptian writing and the reading of the documents of this civilization was certainly one of the most wonderful achievements of the past century. The acuteness of the human intellect has brought back from the darkness a world which seemed to be buried there for eternity, but the civilization of Egypt seemed to us greater when it was impenetrable: it resembles its immense pyramids which enclose so small a chamber; it consists in form rather than content.

IV

ASSYRIO-BABYLONIA

Contrast with Egyptian civilization—Origin, nature and aspect of the gods—Mythology of the gods and heroes—Funerary conception—Religious art — Dynastic art—Assyrio-Babylonian architecture — Assyrio-Babylonian literature—Hebrew monotheism.

If we turn to the religion and art of Assyrio-Babylonia we have before us a very different picture from that presented by the religion and art of Egypt. There is no more striking contrast than that shown by these two civilizations, which were the most ancient and certainly among the greatest in the Mediterranean basin, and which through political conditions came so often into contact and conflict. The first element of difference, which we may take as a symptom only, but which reveals a special condition of things within the country under notice, is the smaller number of sculptured monuments which have come to light. Compared with the real orgy of images which is so characteristic of Egyptian civilization, Assyrio-Babylonian civilization shows excellent work, often superior to that of the Egyptians, but in small quantity. We admit that the smallness of the number of works found is partly owing to the less thorough archæological exploration of the country, though from the middle of the last century up to the present time this exploration has been carried on with extraordinary fervour, inspired by the fascination of that civilization which is so closely connected with the Hebrew and consequently

Contrast with Egyptian Civilization.

with the Christian culture. Another reason for the smallness of the number of works discovered in Assyrio-Babylonia is the destructible nature of the material generally used, though the diorite of the most ancient Chaldæan statues and the alabaster of the Assyrian reliefs show that the artists understood the use of resistant stone when they desired to resist the destroying effect of time. Besides all these reasons, we may refer to the terrible devastation to which the country was subjected in historic times. We learn from the results of the excavations in Elam, with the disinterment of the stele of Naram-Sin, of the inscription of Khammurabi and of many boundary stones, that the conquerors plundered as well as destroyed, but after attributing a due share to these and other causes, the smallness of the number of works of art which have come to light in a country such as Assyrio-Babylonia, which was about equal in extent to Egypt, must be due to a less general use of works of art.

On the other hand we find in Babylonia a much larger number of literary productions, such as tablets and inscribed cylinders. Egypt shows innumerable copies of the same works with variants of very slight interest. Babylonia and Assyria on the contrary have handed down a literature both vaster and more varied than the Egyptian, though there is often only a single copy of a work. This shows that the Babylonians and Assyrians attributed greater value to the written word than to images, and this corresponds exactly with the character of their civilization.

But besides the small number of the monuments, which is only a symptom, the great difference between the two religions is seen in the nature and therefore in the value of the works of plastic art inspired by them.

The known history of the Assyrio-Babylonian * religion embraces at least four thousand years, from 4500 B.C., the date

* M. Jastrow, *Die Religion Babyloniens und Assyriens*, i., Giessen, 1905.

to which tradition goes back, to 539 B.C., the year in which Cyrus entered Babylon in triumph and Mazdaism was established as the religion of the State in place of the old religion.

Origin, Nature and Aspect of the Gods.

In this long period the two regions, Babylonia and Assyria, had by turns the overlordship in politics, but their civilization is essentially Babylonian and Assyria only received and assimilated what came to her from the south. It fell to Babylon, a city of the north of Babylonia which later on gave its name to the whole region, to unite under one government the whole country of Babylonia. This great political work, comparable by reason of its consequences to the establishment of the dynastic rule in Egypt, was the work of the prince Khammurabi, B.C. 2300. About the year 1100 B.C. the Assyrian prince Tiglath-Pileser I reduced Babylon to be a vassal state of Assyria, but Chaldæa asserted its independence. In the later years of the seventh century B.C. Assyria fell into the hands of the Medes; Babylonia reconquered its liberty, but had only a short period of splendour, for in 539 B.C. the taking of Babylon crowned the conquests of Cyrus and the history of Assyrio-Babylonia as an independent and active State came to an end.

The nature and course of religion are here even more than in Egypt bound up with the political vicissitudes of the country.

But here too we are unable to trace with certainty the origins of civilization and we have no knowledge of the primitive nature of this religion. It is a disputed point whether Babylonia was originally inhabited by a pre-Semitic people usually spoken of conventionally but incorrectly as Sumerian and Akkadian, and whether the nucleus of the later Assyrio-Babylonian civilization, which is certainly Semitic, originated with this earlier population. The problem is interesting too in connection with the religious question. For if the Assyrio-Babylonian religion when it appears

in the historic period was already fixed in those elements which were to become traditional, like other religions which have been established during a long period, it will show a residuum of earlier concepts pointing to elaboration before the historic date to which we can go back. But whether this elaboration is due to the Sumerians and the Akkadians, to a Semitic or a pre-Semitic population, is for the history of religion a secondary question in view of existing facts.

The original principle which we find here is, as in Egypt, an animistic concept. A spirit was attributed to objects, to beings, to natural phenomena, and among these last the preponderance was with those natural phenomena which have most influence on human life—light, wind, rain, the phases of the moon, and movements of the stars—things chiefly affecting an agricultural and pastoral people.

No evident trace of the special form of animism which we call animal totemism is found, whether it was that the religion had passed this stage, or that the totemistic compact with celestial phenomena had displaced the totemistic compact with animals, the former being most important of all for an agricultural and pastoral population, who could from the nature of the country spend their lives in comparative safety from the attacks of dangerous beasts. We except of course the theory which sees traces of totemism in the figures of animals used as symbols of certain gods.

In any case there are only traces of an animistic conception, for when Babylonian religion first appeared in the light of history, it was based on theism, that is, on the principle that the universe was ruled by good or bad spirits, distinct from the objects, beings, or phenomena in which they might nevertheless be personified. And this theism, as I have elsewhere said, may be primordial as much as animism.

A phenomenon analogous to that found in Egypt is seen in the localization of divinities, and this has been much in-

fluenced by political vicissitudes. Every city or district possessed its own divinity and, as the city or district was a group of nuclei of a population once consisting of separate units, each of these divinities had either beside it or on a lower level other less important divinities. These were originally its rivals who had been compelled to yield to its superior prestige. It is worthy of note that the popular conscience does not incline so much to monotheism as to a hierarchy in the order of importance of the gods. It would prefer to see reflected in the pantheon the order of worldly authority: and as on earth every human organization, from the family to the State, is based on the principle of command and obedience, of supremacy and subjection, when it has had to fix several gods in one constitution it has placed them in the same relation of dependence and has created a ruler and subjects.

The Babylonian pantheon was therefore formed of local divinities who each had dominion in a certain city and were surrounded by inferior divinities and spirits. The personal dominion over one part of heaven or earth attributed to these gods when they were later on grouped together must be considered as due to this grouping. In fact when they assumed this dominion over the general phenomena of heaven or earth, that is, when they became universal gods, they still remained bound by cult and tradition to one certain place. Thus En-lil or Bel was the god of the city of Nippur and to him was attributed the dominion of the earth. The son of En-lil, Nin-gir-su, lord of Girsu, one quarter of the city of Shirpurla, was the god of war and the protector of fecundity. Ea, honoured in the city of Eridu, was the god of the deep waters. Nergal, god of the city of Cutha, ruled over the kingdom of the dead. Shamash, lord of the cities of Larsa and Sippar, was god of the sun and of the day. Sin, or Nannar, was worshipped in the city of Ur and was god of the moon.

These gods, as they had acquired a general character, survived the importance of their own city, but when some new

divinity arose on the political or religious horizon, the old not seldom gave up their position to the new deity and became as it were a shadow of a past age in the new pantheon. The god En-lil or Bel, for example, the god of the city of Nippur, who had assumed the universal character of lord of the earth, saw a share of his authority pass to the chief god of Babylon, Marduk, who even assumed the name of Bel when his power was increased through the work of Khammurabi. Just so in Egypt had Amen, the god of Thebes, assumed part of the essence of the god Ra when through political conditions he became the chief god of the country.

Given this influence of political changes upon the fate of the Assyrio-Babylonian gods, we can distinguish in the course of religion four periods corresponding to the chief historical epochs: the Babylonian period before Khammurabi, the Babylonian period after Khammurabi, the Assyrio-Babylonian period and the Neo-Babylonian period.

In the Babylonian period before Khammurabi the function of the principal gods was already fixed, though the complete organization of the pantheon was established at a later time.

Among the gods of this period, characterized as gods of the universe because they are protectors of parts of the universe though bound at the same time to their own original city, are included the great triad of Anu, god of heaven, Bel, god of earth, Ea, god of water, and two from another triad, Sin, god of the moon, Shamash, god of the sun, to whom was added later Adad, god of the tempest, or Ishtar, goddess of fecundity.

In later periods new gods were added or the position of old gods was changed, but this organization was not disturbed. In fact when Khammurabi completed his political work of the centralization of Babylonia, Marduk, the god of the city of Babylon, became the supreme god. He assumed the functions of En-lil or Bel, god of Nippur, who till then had been supreme head of the Babylonian pantheon. The new position

of Marduk necessitated the regulation of the position of the other gods and so Ea was made his father.

The Assyrian conquest took the primacy from Marduk. Ashur, god of war, the god of the capital of Assyria, took the chief place, but as the Assyrians desired to show their veneration for the Babylonian gods, though unwilling to tolerate the omnipotence of Marduk, which might interfere with that of Ashur, they favoured the god Nebo of the city of Borsippa, who in tradition had become the son of Marduk. Thus too Adad, god of the tempest, of thunder and of lightning, possibly a god of Assyrian origin, had his chief cult at this period. And Ishtar lost her characteristic of "Mother of Humanity" to accentuate in company with Ashur her warlike character.

During the neo-Babylonian period Marduk recovered his preponderance and with him his son Nebo rose to the highest honours. But in this period, which was highly religious, possibly with a religious formality comparable with that of the Saïte period in Egypt, there no longer existed a creative power in matters of religion and a more or less artificial renascence of ancient cults satisfied the country.

The Persians and Greeks, who ruled the country in succession, were equally tolerant with regard to the Assyrio-Babylonian religion, but the country became disintegrated and returned to a marshy condition at the contact of a new civilization. It was not, like that of Egypt, violently destroyed by a new religion, but was slowly consumed by old age before the new doctrines conquered the land.

If we wish to distinguish the chief characters of the Assyrio-Babylonian pantheon, we must note that this as well as the Egyptian pantheon is chiefly based on celestial phenomena: the gods are still bound to the phenomenon as protectors.

Only, while in the Egyptian religion the chief divinity is the god of the sun, in the Assyrio-Babylonian religion the

chief divinities are the gods of the moon and stars. This can also be deduced from the family relationships which exist between these divinities. In Egypt the god of the sun is father of the god of the moon, or at least the moon is the second eye of the god of the sun. In Babylonia, Shamash, god of the sun, is son of Sin, god of the moon. What most interests Egypt is then the birth, life and death of the sun, what interests Babylonia is the starry sky of night. Babylonia was in fact the cradle of astrology and astronomy.

In the different degree of importance attributed to the two orders of phenomena, we can see that the influence on the well-being of the country was possessed by the solar course in Egypt and by the phases of the moon in Babylonia. We find traces of this diversity of influence also in the myth of the punishment and the annihilation of perverse humanity. In Egypt this annihilation is brought about by the destroying force of the sun, for the sun sends down his eye in the form of Hathor, while in Babylonia we find the myth of the flood, the destruction of mankind by means of water. The ruin of Egypt was when the extreme heat prevented the inundation of the Nile from reaching the necessary height, the ruin of Mesopotamia was when the alluvial water did not retire sufficiently, but formed a marsh for a long distance from the banks. Egypt saw its benefit in the inundation, Mesopotamia saw its benefit in the drying up of the waters. For that reason forgiveness is conceded to man after two contrary modes of punishment. In Egypt the lake of blood-coloured liquid serves to extinguish the power of the sun, and when Hathor drinks of it, she no longer recognizes men and cannot destroy them ; in Mesopotamia on the other hand the solar force causes the water to retire.

But besides the different position held by the gods of the sun, moon and stars and the different degree of power attributed to the celestial phenomena, there is one point which marks a distinct division separating the Egyptian religion

from that of Assyrio-Babylonia. In Egypt the god is identified with the phenomenon, in Babylon the god only rules over or, we may say, presides over the phenomenon. In Egypt the sun-god, either in the form of a beetle or in his day-boat or his night-boat, journeys over the whole of the vault of heaven or the underground stream, that is, he is obliged continually to perform the same action. In Babylonia, on the other hand, the god gives movement to the heavenly body as other gods cause other natural phenomena, but these gods are not identified with the heavenly body in its movement. That is to say, the Assyrio-Babylonian religion is farther removed than the Egyptian from an animistic conception, for the animistic conception is still on the horizon when the spirit or the god who presides over the phenomenon is identified with the phenomenon itself, when the phenomenon is conceived of as an animated thing. The Assyrio-Babylonian religion displays that same stage of detachment between the phenomenon and the divinity which we shall find in the Greek deities whose original union with natural phenomena is undeniable.

Another characteristic which distinguishes these gods from those of Egypt is that, with the exception of the god Nergal, as to whom we are not certain, they were never imagined in beast form. They have always kept their human form in the popular imagination. This agrees with the absence of certain traces of animal totemism which we have already noted, for totemism is one if not the only path which might lead to the theriomorphic representation of the gods.

This conception of the gods in purely human form has enabled the Babylonian religion to differentiate the aspect of those gods who are beneficent spirits from all those who are harmful—those demons who bring disease and wounds and disturb the sleep of the dead. These beings might be distinguished by features derived from animals, the creatures which man considers inferior to himself, but whom he fears

on account of their power of injuring him. And in fact this religion represents its demons with the heads of beasts.

This plainly shown dualism in the outward appearance between the good spirits represented with human heads and the evil spirits with beast heads has made it possible for this religion to characterize wild but beneficent beings, to create for example the figure of the bull and the lion with a human head.

Mythology of the Gods and Heroes.

But if this religion is distinguished from that of Egypt by several elements—the prevalence of lunar and stellar divinities, the difference of relation between the god and the celestial phenomenon and the conception of the gods in a purely human form—they resemble each other in one point—the absence of a mythology of the gods. There are, it is true, in the accounts of the creation of the world and of the flood similar myths to those recorded in Egypt, but it is a case of actions which only required the intervention of the gods for a short period. From that moment they became absolutely inactive except in the direction of the phenomena over which they preside and the protection which the believer always hopes to receive from them.

Thus it is related in the myth of the creation of the world that in the beginning there existed only the primordial waters and that the god and goddess thereof were Apsu and Tiamat. They had children and grandchildren, and finally their great-grandchildren were the great gods of the universe. But Apsu and Tiamat organized a rebellion against this new order of things represented by the new gods. Ea heard of this plot and overthrew Apsu. Tiamat then prepared for vengeance by creating terrible monsters to fight against the gods. Marduk, the god of Babylon, was chosen as champion of the gods; he overcame Tiamat and divided his body into two portions—of one portion he made the firmament and of

the other he made the earth. Then the stars were created and the course of the day and the year was established. The work of creation culminated in the creation of man. Marduk induced another god, probably Ea, to cut off his head, and he made man of his own bones and his own blood.

We will presently give the story of the flood which is contained in the epic of Gilgamesh.

But though we attribute the want of a mythology of the gods in Egypt to the character of these gods who, being personifications of natural phenomena, had every day to perform the same action and could therefore do nothing else, the absence of a mythology in Babylonia was due to other causes. Above all we observe that the establishment of the pantheon was, for historical reasons, more difficult here than in Egypt. Till the time of Khammurabi the different States of Babylonia were independent, their union was not permanent, for the rise of the Assyrian Empire caused Chaldæa to be separated from Babylonia, and the Assyrian Empire itself had to give way to the new Babylonian Empire. In a word, Babylonia and Assyria never formed a firm political union, or even that tradition of unity which was represented, in spite of some interruptions, by the dynastic regime in Egypt. Hence the gods of the different cities and districts who were brought into contact by the political union were even less able than the gods of Egypt to form a properly organized family. Proofs of this are seen in the great difficulty found by theologians in establishing certain genealogical relations, and also in the prevalence of male gods in the pantheon of Babylonia. The goddess beside the god as his spouse is only a shadow or reflection of the god,* and there are few goddesses like Ishtar or Allatu who possess a characteristic or a dominion of their own. This is partly due to the subordinate position of women in this Semitic world, but it is also partly due to the large proportion of male gods, because these were gods of separate

* M. Jastrow, *op. cit.*, i. 99 ff.

cities, grouped together in consequence of political union. The result of this is a pantheon of males among whom it was difficult to establish family ties, as had been so skilfully done in the Egyptian religion, and in default of these bonds which might give occasion for various kinds of action within the circle of family relations the gods have remained inactive—gods without myth.

One single great myth relating to a goddess is found in the Assyrio-Babylonian religion—the descent of Ishtar into Hades to seek the health-giving waters which were to give back life to Tammuz. She is obliged to pass the seven gates of Erebus and at each of these she is deprived of a part of her clothing and ornaments, till she remains nude as the prisoner of Allatu. But all nature grieves at the absence of Ishtar and Ea then creates Uddushu-namir that he may liberate Ishtar. Ishtar recovers her liberty and her ornaments and brings the water to restore Tammuz. In this myth there is certainly a shadowing of the arrest of life in nature by reason of the imprisonment of the goddess of fecundity; we have here a myth of natural phenomena. Nevertheless we seek in vain in Assyrio-Babylonian religion for the important position held in Egyptian religion by the periodic phenomena, personified by gods, and the mythical commemorative character assumed by this religion indicates the difference of conception between the two religions.

Though the Babylonian mythology of the gods is scanty, a heroic mythology is not absent as in Egypt. It does indeed turn on the figure of one single hero, Gilgamesh, but it surpasses in poetic value any story from Egypt and in conception it comes near to the great Greek epic. The cause which in Egypt prevented the formation of a mythology of the heroes, the presence of an earthly prince who had the position of a living god, did not affect Babylonia. Though the Assyrio-Babylonian civilization was based on the dominion of the princes, yet this prince never, either

in the time of the Babylonian Empire or in the time of the Assyrian Empire, assumed that all-pervading position held by the Pharaoh during the whole course of Egyptian civilization.

There was then nothing to prevent the rise in popular tradition of a heroic figure capable of great enterprises. Certainly a hero could not be other than a prince and Gilgamesh is prince of Erech. The epic of this hero * is only known in fragments and sometimes it is impossible to find the connection between the various episodes. Gilgamesh is two-thirds god and one-third man. He oppresses his people by his severe rule; girls and women especially have to bemoan this to the gods. They make the goddess Aruru, who had created Gilgamesh, give life to a person of equal force who would contend with him. At this point the story of Gilgamesh is interwoven with that of Eabani (?), a singular being, who has a hairy body and long hair. He dresses in skins and lives among the beasts whom he protects. A hunter complains of this to his father, who seems to be a god, and against his advice he goes to Gilgamesh and obtains from him a hierodula to seduce Eabani. Eabani is seduced, but is then no longer recognized by the beasts and therefore returns to the woman, who induces him to go with her to Gilgamesh. They reach Erech when Gilgamesh has had two dreams which prepare him for the coming of Eabani. The two heroes make friends.

But Eabani is not satisfied with the new life. He flies from the city and returns to the plains. He curses the hunter and the hierodula who were the cause of his unhappiness and complains to the sun-god of the hunger and poverty which torment him. The god reminds him of all the good which he enjoyed with Gilgamesh and shows him that the hierodula has been punished. Eabani is comforted and returns to Gilgamesh

* P. Jensen, *Das Gilgamesch-Epos in der Weltliteratur*, i., Strassburg, 1906.

in Erech, and has a dream in which the world of the dead is spoken of.

There is a lacuna here in the story and we do not know if Eabani and Gilgamesh really went down into Erebus, or if it is only an allusion to the near death of Eabani.

The two heroes make an expedition to the cedar wood and the mountain of the gods in the far East, against the tyrant of Elam, Khumbaba. They fight him and carry away his head as a trophy of victory.

On their return Ishtar falls in love with Gilgamesh, but Gilgamesh, knowing the unhappiness of those who have loved her, refuses her love. Ishtar then asks help from Anu, god of heaven, and threatens to break open the gates of hell and bring out the dead if her prayer is not granted. Then a celestial bull created by Anu comes down from heaven and is overcome by Eabani, who also attacks Ishtar. Eabani and Gilgamesh return victorious to Erech, but here Eabani dies.

Gilgamesh is overcome by a great grief and retires to the desert. He begins to fear death. He therefore thinks of going to Sit-napishtim, who is immortal, wise and a friend of the gods. He sets off and goes beyond the desert to Mount Mashu, at whose gate stand two gigantic beings, man and woman with the bodies of scorpions. After some resistance they allow him to pass and he reaches the seashore, where is the goddess Siduri, who, being terrified by his appearance, tries to stop the way but gives in at the threats of Gilgamesh. Siduri points out Arad-Ea, the boatman of Sit-napishtim and Gilgamesh starts on the stormy and dangerous crossing. At last they come to shore and Gilgamesh talks to Sit-napishtim, who answers his fears by saying that man must die once.

But how is it that Sit-napishtim is immortal? Here comes the story of the flood, which is known in other and slightly different accounts which recall even in the details that of the Bible. Bel wished to bring about a flood to punish mankind, but Sit-napishtim was a friend of the god Ea and by his

advice made an ark in which he collected the animals and shut himself in with his family. The storm began and the human race was destroyed by the flood. When the flood was over Sit-napishtim sent forth the dove, which returned, and then the swallow, which returned also, because they found nowhere to alight. At last he sent forth the raven, which did not return. Sit-napishtim then came forth from the ark. Bel was angry because Sit-napishtim was saved, but was at last appeased and Sit-napishtim and his wife became gods. This is why Sit-napishtim is immortal.

After this journey Gilgamesh returned to his own country, but did not regain his peace. He longed to see Eabani and the god Ea obtained from Nergal that the shade of his friend might appear to him. He asks Ea for information as to the kingdom of the dead and probably dies soon afterwards himself. I have given in full the myth of Gilgamesh because it is so rich in human content. All the griefs which afflict humanity are shadowed forth in the episodes of the myth, in the strife with outside enemies and in the internal storms of the spirit. But what gives the special value to this epic is the sense of death by which it is pervaded. Gilgamesh fears to die. Life even with its troubles and griefs is more desirable than death. That is to say that religion could not offer to human hope a happy vision of the life beyond the grave, such as the Egyptian religion had in its wisdom been able to create.

Funerary Conception.

Very different is the funerary conception of the Assyrio-Babylonian religion. We can say nothing definite as to its theory of the fate of man after death, not because there is no reference to it in literature, but because this theory, like the figures of the gods, had some vague and unseizable quality. We know that there was an Erebus and that it was presided over by two deities, the god Nergal and the goddess Allatu. We know, too, that there were evil spirits there and that the life was hopelessly sad, but

there is no picture of it with realistic details such as that shown by Egyptian religion.

And it must be so, for the higher and more spiritual is the conception of the gods the less materialistic is the conception of death. The more the gods are honoured because they direct our moral actions and not as protectors of the material part of our being, the less is thought of this material part and its preservation after death. This phenomenon we find in its most accentuated features in the Hebrew religion and we shall find it later in the Christian religion.

The want of precise knowledge as to the substance in which we shall continue to live after death, or rather, the knowledge that we shall survive in a spiritual form, would prevent the supply of costly grave furniture and plentiful provision of food for the dead. The funeral offices would be very poor from a material point of view. As testimony of this we quote an anecdote from Herodotus (I, 187). He relates that Nitokris, queen of Babylon, had built a tomb for herself and caused this inscription to be placed above it: "If any of the sovereigns my successors shall be in extreme want of money, let him open my tomb and take what money he may think proper; if his necessity be not great, let him forbear; the experiment will perhaps be dangerous." The tomb remained intact till the time of Darius, who opened the tomb but found no treasure; he found only the body and this inscription: "If your avarice had not been equally base and insatiable you would not have intruded on the repose of the dead." This anecdote shows the respect shown to the tomb and also the poverty of its contents even when it was the tomb of a queen.

This poverty is shown also by the contents of the numerous tombs which have been excavated in the country. The funeral furniture is limited to weapons and vases. This shows that death was supposed to be a continuation, if a ghostly one, of earthly life and that the dead man was supposed to require weapons for fighting and food for his nourishment. But as

no images intended to ensure the existence and the happiness of the life beyond the tomb were placed beside the real objects, this proves that no such material importance was attributed to this after-life as was recognized for it by the Egyptians, and that it did not appear sufficiently desirable to be ensured at any cost, even by the violence concealed within the magic scope of plastic art.

We will now consider the influence of such a religious conception upon art. Assyrio-Babylonian civilization is not without certain rough productions of magic art, for the people always attributed the highest importance to incantations. Not in vain was it the civilization of the Magi. But we will fix our attention on the great religious art which has escaped destruction and which took the place of the magic art of the people.

Religious Art.

First of all we must note that in this religion the gods were by preference represented symbolically. The substitution of a symbol for the real figure indicates that art does not feel able to render in material form the spiritual nature of the divinity and shows a fear of profanation. The symbol in its original intention is not in itself an object of worship, it is so only when there is concealed behind it the image of the divinity which art was unwilling to represent. And it is under symbols that we see the Chaldæan divinities honoured in the numerous boundary stones (Fig. 35).*

From these we learn † that Anu was symbolized by the seat with the royal cap and the weapon in the form of a stick, Bel by the royal horned cap, Ea by the staff with a ram's head standing upon a battlement, Sin by the crescent moon, Shamash by the solar disk, Ishtar by the star-shaped

* J. de Morgan, *Délégation en Perse, Mémoires*, Paris, 1900, i. 165 ff., t. xiv. ff.; Paris, 1905, ii. 137 ff., t. xxvi. f.

† K. Frank, *Bilder und Symbole babylonisch-assyrischer Götter*, in *Leipziger Semitistische Studien*, ii. 2, Leipzig, 1906.

FIG. 35.—SYMBOLS OF BABYLONIAN DIVINITIES.

Boundary Stone of the period of the Cossæan king Melishihu. (Louvre.)

(*De Morgan, "Délég. en Perse, Mémoires,"* i., pl. 16.)

[*See page* 136.]

To face p. 136.

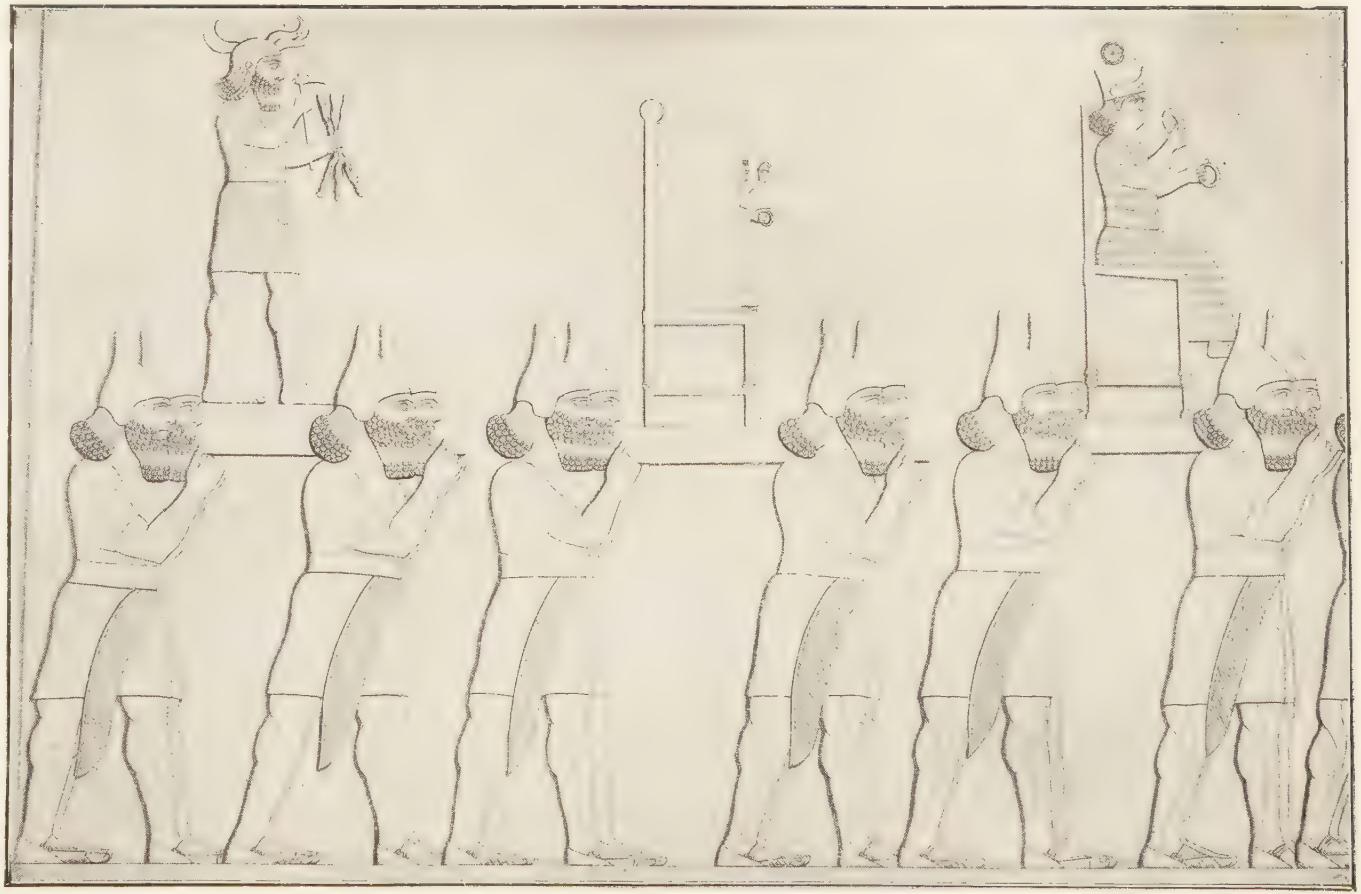

FIG. 36.—STATUES OF THE GODS CARRIED IN PROCESSION.

From Nimrud. (British Museum.)

(*Layard*, "*Nineveh*," i., pl. 65.)

[*See page* 137.]

disk, Gula by the woman with a dog, Marduk by the lance, Ashur by the archer within the winged wheel, Ninib by two lions' heads upon a pole, Nergal by a nail with a cubical head, Adad by a thunderbolt, Nusku by a lamp, Iskhara by the scorpion, Aruru by the bird on the pilaster, Sir by the serpent, not to speak of other symbols whose identification with the gods has not yet been possible. The fact that some of these symbols, such as those of Gula or Ashur, are human figures shows that this religion did not prohibit the use of images, but only avoided representing the deity in human form because it considered the divinity essentially superior to humanity.

And that there was no absolute prohibition and that the divinity was sometimes represented in human form is known not only from the Assyrio-Babylonian texts and the literary testimony of the Greeks (for Herodotus, I, 181, 182, besides a temple in which there was only the couch and the table of the god, names another in which was his statue), but we deduce it also from the monuments. Besides many votive figures of gods, an Assyrian relief of Maltaja is named which shows the figures of seven deities: Ashur, Belit, Sin, Bel, Shamash, Adad, Ishtar; and the relief of Nimrud, on which is represented the carrying in procession of the statues of the gods (Fig. 36). And these reliefs enable us to make out the relation of plastic art to religion when this is disarmed for want of traditional types in the representation of the gods. The gods of the relief of Maltaja have no individual character, so that were it not for the presence of their symbols it would be impossible to identify them. Not so is it in the Greek religion, where the gods, though they are all represented in human form, can easily be distinguished through their traditional individuality. A religion like that of Assyrio-Babylonia, in which the divinity, though conceived in human aspect, had a spiritual quality which caused representation in concrete form to be avoided, and preferred representation by symbols,

must have been incapable of inspiring art with a very definite type when at times it was found desirable to represent the divinity in actual figure.

This explains why a traditional type of the divinity was never established in Assyrio-Babylonian art, though this traditional type was not absent in the case of an inferior religion, that of Egypt.

In the case of the Assyrio-Babylonian religion and art there remained no way of honouring the god but by representing scenes of his cult, in which a man dedicating or offering something was the chief figure and the gods were only imagined as present through the presence of their symbol. As I have already observed, this religion placed no absolute prohibition on images, and this is how in reliefs like that of Khammurabi (Fig. 37), and of Nabu-aplu-iddina (Fig. 38), or on cylinders (Fig. 39)* we sometimes find not only the symbol but the actual figure of the divinity. In any case this figure is less individual and therefore less speaking than the symbol.

A wider field for plastic art was offered by heroic myth, and in a series of cylinders we can point out, though they are not always very clear, scenes of the descent of Ishtar into Erebus as well as of the deeds of Gilgamesh and Eabani (Fig. 40).

But so far as we can judge from the monuments that have been preserved, even this ground has not been much worked by Assyrio-Babylonian art; at least no tradition was established in it which could influence artistic forms either much or for long.

What may have contributed to this is a certain reserve, explicable in an art which did not willingly represent the figure of the divinity even alone, in scenes in which the divinity had more or less share. And in the second place the character

* J. Menant, *Recherches sur la glyptique orientale*, i., ii., Paris, 1883, 1886.

FIG. 37.—THE GOD SHAMASH AND KHAMMURABI.

Heading of the Code of Khammurabi. (Louvre.)

(*De Morgan*, "*Délég. en Perse, Mémoires*," ii., pl. 5.)

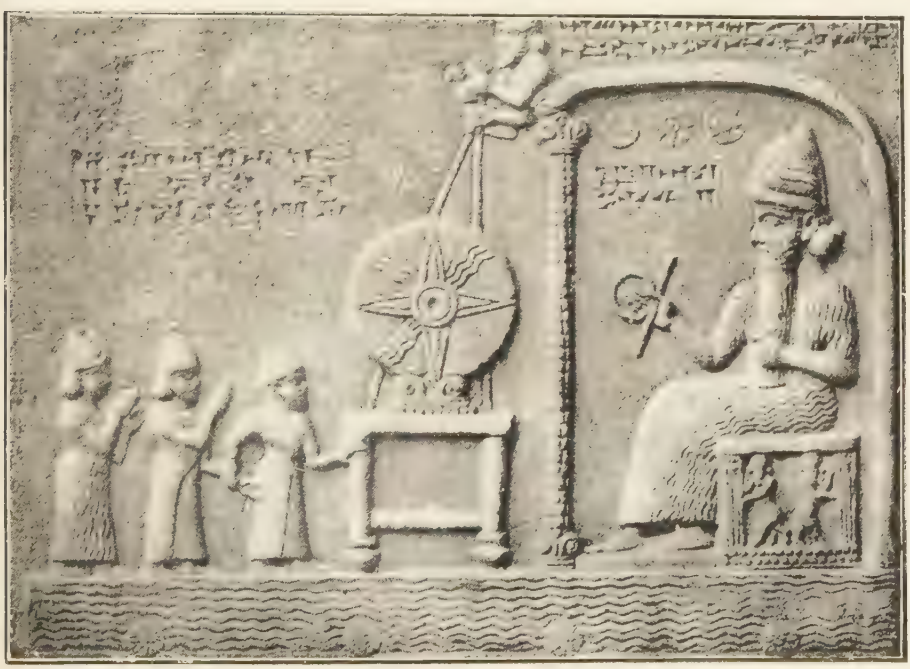

FIG. 38.—RELIGIOUS CEREMONY: THE KING NABU-APLU-IDDINA BEFORE THE GOD SHAMASH.

(British Museum.)

(*Menant*, "*Glyptique*," i., pl. 15.)

[*See page* 138.]

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FIG. 39.—RELIGIOUS CEREMONY BEFORE THE GOD SIN.

(*Menant.* "*Glyptique*," i., pl. 4, n. 2.)

FIG. 40.—CONTESTS OF GILGAMESH AND EABANI (?).

(*Menant.* "*Glyptique*," i., pl. 2, n. 2.)

(British Museum.)

FIG. 41.—CHARM TABLET AGAINST DISEASES.

From Hamah. (Coll. de Clercq.)

(*Coll. de Clercq*, ii., pl. 34 a.)

[*See pages* 138, 140, 162.]

of this Babylonian mythology may have had some influence, especially the epic of Gilgamesh, which was rather an epic of sentiment than of action. Beyond the two or three episodes of fighting with fabulous creatures its most noteworthy point is the development of the state of mind of Gilgamesh and Eabani, which is something that the forms of plastic art were not able to illustrate, at least with the degree of capacity possessed at that time. To understand what a difference of inspiration might come to art through the number of subjects from a poem based on sentiments and a poem based on action, one need only think how few episodes plastic art has taken from the *Iliad*, a work in twenty-four cantos, and how many might have been taken from the *Little Iliad*, a work consisting of more than four books, but perhaps not more than six, if the material of its second part was treated as fully as in the poem *The Destruction of Ilion*. We can understand why Aristotle (*Poet.* 23) says that one or two tragedies might be taken from the *Iliad*, while from the *Little Iliad* more than eight might be taken. Tragedy is the literary form which most requires action, which indeed has in action its reason for existence, and plastic art begins by representing action, or at least by representing sentiments brought out in action, and only late, after a long pupilage, does it become capable of representing sentiments independently of action. Tragedy and plastic art were therefore in a parallel position before the *Iliad* and the *Little Iliad*. And plastic art was equally unarmed before the epic of Gilgamesh as before the *Iliad*.

Art was in no more satisfactory state with respect to the funerary conception. What inspiration could come to art, for example, from the Babylonian ideas of the after-life which we find shadowed forth in Isaiah, chapter xiv? We see the descent into Erebus rather than the ascent into heaven predicted to the proud king of Babylon according to ideas that are not certainly those of the Hebrew race and that must therefore reflect a Babylonian conception. But the evan-

escence, the vagueness of this life beyond the grave explains why plastic art can attain so little through it. Compare for a moment the funerary conception of Egypt and that of Assyrio-Babylonia, observe what a different place it had in the life and daily cares of the two peoples, and you will understand on the one hand how this diversity is only the logical sequence of their different conception of the divinity and on the other hand why Assyrio-Babylonian civilization is absolutely without a funerary art.

There is in fact no monument which can safely be said to be the product or the reflection of this funerary conception. Those characteristic monuments which at one time passed under the name of reliefs of Hades (Fig. 41), and were supposed to represent in an abbreviated form death and the passage of the soul through the river of Erebus, are, as has been recently demonstrated,* magic tablets against the demons of fever, they are monuments of art intended not for death but for life.

Dynastic Art.

What impulse could be given to plastic art by a religious conception which did not easily lend itself to the representation of the deity and had closed the whole field of funerary representation? It is not now possible to know if Assyrio-Babylonian religion, before taking this position with regard to plastic art, has not had a period of fruitful artistic inspiration, and if it arrived at this benevolent diffidence towards art through a slow process of spiritualization. We are far from knowing the origins of Babylonian civilization and its earliest sculptured monuments are in some cases masterly works which indicate that they were preceded by a long earlier period.

But if we allow that this religious conception has always been more or less characterized by a lack of inclination

* K. Frank, *Babylonische Beschwörungsreliefs*, in *Leipziger Semitistische Studien*, iii. 3, Leipzig, 1908.

towards plastic art, we shall find in another element of this civilization a spring of artistic inspiration which was absent from religion. If Assyrio-Babylonian art did not lend its aid to religion it was at the service of individuals who were in the eyes of the people invested with an aureole as glittering as that of the gods: it placed itself at the service of the princes. Dynastic art, as we have already seen in Egyptian civilization, has one characteristic through which it may be considered semi-religious: the glorification on earth of a being who is honoured as superior to other mortals. The Babylonian or Assyrian prince certainly never pretended to that divine character which was recognized in the Pharaoh of Egypt; at least during the first two periods of the history of this civilization he did not assume that cumbersome position which caused the prince to weigh so heavily on Egyptian life. But in this civilization also the prince was preoccupied with the future and desired to leave to posterity the record of his exploits, and from the reliefs of Ur-Nina and the stele of Naram-Sin to the decorative slabs of the palaces of Khorsabad and Kouyunjik the great art of Babylonia is exclusively dynastic art. And as the princes did not wish to appear as the immortal gods they had themselves represented as men doing the actions of men. This keeping to nature could not be due to religion, but was suggested by the glorification of the dynasty. For this art, at least during the two first Babylonian periods, was able to observe and reproduce in a life-like and natural manner both beasts and men. In the Assyrian period it became stylized and lost in a skilled minuteness, but never gainsaid the excellence of its origin.

Still it was a dynastic art for the interior decoration of palaces, produced for the enjoyment of few, and at the same time as it was unable to put forth strong roots in the midst of the people and free itself from a certain rigidity and mannerism which marked it out as being of the court, it was

destined to end with the dynasty. It left this legacy of original sin to the new rulers of the country—the Persians, and while religion independently of art, crossing the intervening territory of the Hebrews, must have had a notable influence on Mediterranean civilization, this art became decadent and died out without leaving a trace upon the history of human art. The Phœnicians trading on the coasts of the Ægean and Italy made great use in their industrial art of Assyrio-Babylonian motives, but these, like the Egyptian motives, remained a dead letter, so far as the ultimate development of art in these countries was concerned: and on the horizon Greek art was looking out with a new form of vital energy.

Thus the same fate awaited Assyrio-Babylonian and Egyptian art, that of wearing out their life within the circle of the people to whom they belonged; the former because it had no ties with the spiritualism of Assyrio-Babylonian religion and the latter because it was indissolubly bound to the materialism of Egyptian religion. For an art to pass the confines of its own country of origin and come into favour with other nations, it must either, like Greek art, free itself from the oppression of religious bonds, and while taking its figure subjects from religion and myth, have made from them pure ideals of material and moral beauty which should speak to the eyes and the minds of all men, or it should, like Buddhist and Christian art, become indissolubly bound to the ethical content of a universal religion, so as to follow it in the paths by which it breaks through the barriers of race. Art can only march on through the world when it is either beautiful or moral.

Assyrio-Babylonian Architecture.

We know but little of Babylonian architecture because clay being the material for building offered by the country, we find only heaps of ruins in which it is difficult to make out the plan of a building. But if we can say that here the architecture, as a whole, is independent of the religious conception, there are certain features in

which we must acknowledge this influence. One of these is the absence of funerary edifices. While Babylonia, like Egypt, had its temples, sometimes on a grand scale, there are neither royal nor private tombs to recall the pyramids and the mastabas of Egypt. This is in complete agreement with what we have said as to the lack of preoccupation for a life beyond the grave which marks this civilization. The Babylonian, not knowing exactly what his future life would be, felt no need to prepare a great and permanent dwelling for the defunct such as was desired by the Egyptian. We may suppose that at the most he prepared a bare and simple sepulchre for his kings, such as that which we find in the account of Herodotus of the tomb of Queen Nitokris.

But if in the present state of our knowledge we cannot point out features which show for certain a religious impress, there is one among the sacred buildings of Babylonia which owes its inspiration and form to the special nature of the religion—the "zikkurrat" or tower of many stories.

The episode of the Tower of Babel, qualified by Hebrew anger against Babylon as a punishment of the Lord (Gen. xi. 1 ff.), preserves in an expression the reason for existence of this building: the top of the tower was to reach up to heaven. We have already recorded how in the Babylonian religion the most important place was left to the deities of the moon and stars. To approach as nearly as possible to the starry sky of night to seek out the will of the gods was the object of the zikkurrat. And this indication of an aspiration towards the heavens as the seat of the gods and of the spiritual character of the religion can be better appreciated when we recall the architectural forms of the religious buildings of the Egyptians, their constant tendency to descend beneath the earth, a tendency which is manifested more often in the temple than elsewhere, when the way leads from the lofty pylons of the entrance downward to the small dark chamber where the image of the god is kept. The history of architecture has again found this aspiration

towards heaven in Christianity in the Gothic church by the same line of descent from the Semitic spirit.

In the study of plastic art we observed that Assyrio-Babylonian culture, which with its latent tendency against the use of sacred images has drawn little inspiration from its pantheon, found an opening in the art which served for the glorification of its princes—dynastic art. And for historical reasons this dynastic art flourished more in Assyria than in Babylonia. The same direction was given to their architecture. Assyria, poor in temples, has marvellous palaces at Nimrud, Khorsabad, and Kouyunjik. By virtue of them Assyrian culture vindicates its supremacy in architecture over Egyptian culture. It would be quite a mistake to seek a religious imprint in these palaces which were intended for non-religious purposes, but the semi-religious character which we have already recognized in the dynastic art, because it is the glorification on earth of a being held as superior to other mortals, has not been devoid of influence in the splendour of their decoration and in the limitation of this decoration to the inside walls. The prince in his palace was as the god in his temple.

Assyrio-Babylonian Literature.

The reflections produced by the religious conception on art and literature which are found in Egyptian civilization appear also in Assyrio-Babylonian civilization. This civilization has its magical tests, its hymns, its prayers, a constant care for material well-being, and a lively sense of the protection to be asked of the deity. It has all that is usually found in Egyptian literature, and, generally speaking, in all primitive literatures created for the defence of man in the present and the future, but it has also something more, something higher. If these magical texts, these hymns, and these prayers are more closely examined we note a greater spirituality of conception in accord with the whole religion. This literature does not imagine the diseases

and remedies in that materialistic form which is peculiar to the Egyptian imagination, nor does it reduce the protection of the gods to an oppressive incubus of real actions like that of the Egyptian gods.

And besides being different in conception even when it seems similar in kind, this literature possesses that which is lacking in Egyptian literature, a historic sense. We have already alluded to the importance of the epic of Gilgamesh, an epic that could only be found among a people who loved to look back on the past. Let us add that even in contemporary documents which were only intended for the glorification of the prince the historic sense is greater than in the Egyptian documents, and this makes it possible to trace out a clearer and more precise account, at any rate as far as the chronology is concerned, of the history of Babylon and Assyria than what is possible in the case of Egypt. And if the archives and libraries of ancient texts which have been copied, not like those of Egypt for purposes of magic, but to preserve the knowledge and memory of the past, have been discovered at Kouyunjik, at Nimrud, at Abu Habbah (Sippar), at Dshumdshuma, at Borsippa, at Nippur, and if Assyrian kings like Ashurbanipal have thought it their duty to have copied so many documents of a past that went back thousands of years, all this is due to the historic sense of the nation.

If it is true that the deeper we penetrate into the spirit of Egyptian civilization the smaller a thing does it appear, and if it is comparable to its immense pyramids which contain the smallest of chambers, the Assyrio-Babylonian civilization reveals daily more wonderful remains and in its turn may be compared to the "telloh," the sand-heaps along the banks of the two rivers which conceal documents of art and literature of inestimable value. Thus in contradistinction to Egyptian civilization that of Assyrio-Babylonia is more important in substance than in appearance. As long as Assyrio-Babylonian art was judged by late and fossilized work, such as the reliefs

of the Assyrian palaces, it might seem dull and lifeless. But now we must rather judge it by the marvellous sculptures which have been recovered in the excavations of Telloh and the exploration of Elam, by the work before and after Khammurabi. The old question of "Babel and Bible," of the undeniable influence of Babylonian upon Hebrew civilization, apart from the intransigence of theologians and the stupidity of the incompetent, has rolled away the clouds that hid this treasure of Babylonian civilization, which is invaluable to the history of humanity.

Hebrew Monotheism.

Now that we have made clear the characteristics of Assyrio-Babylonian religion, we can understand the weight of its influence upon the course of the Hebrew religion and thence upon the Christian religion. The relations between the two religions were not limited to mythological elements, as the accounts of the creation and the flood, and in some of these, the account of the creation, for example, the influence of the Egyptian conception may be clearly perceived; the period of slavery in Egypt would account for this influence. They held to numerous ritual observances, such as the prohibition as to eating certain animals and the original character of the Sabbath day on which all work was forbidden, they were not overloaded with legislation, but in their dependence on Babylon the code of Khammurabi was the greatest of revelations. The Hebrew religion is based on two important principles: monotheism and the prohibition of images.

The Hebrews carried to an extreme what existed potentially in Babylonian religion. Babylonian polytheism was only the product of political centralization, every city having its god and this god remaining bound to the city even after he had been included in the common pantheon. And besides this pre-eminent position of a single god which is already an indication of a monotheistic tendency there existed in the home of the

Babylonian religion true and special monotheistic currents. This religion made use, too, of images of the deity, but somewhat sparingly and, one might almost say, unwillingly. Finally, only small importance was attributed to the life beyond the tomb, or one might say there was no materialistic conception of that life. These elements of Babylonian religion were common more or less to the religions of all Semitic communities. By reason of their special political conditions the Hebrews gave the most severely logical form to these principles and arrived at monotheism and the prohibition of images. They honoured the deity not for what man expected after death, but for the constant protection accorded to him during life, banished all magic from their religious conception and impregnated it wholly with the historical consciousness.

This little nation, placed between two great monarchies of antiquity, the Egyptian and the Assyrian, cast from the slavery of Egypt to the captivity of Babylon, felt in religion the only protection of their unity and therefore the only hope of independence, and enclosed themselves in this religion as in an impregnable fortress. Only their god could be the true god, and therefore he alone must have sole dominion over the universe. And thus monotheism was consolidated once and for ever. If the Hebrews had worshipped their god in images as they saw done by the oppressing nation in the midst of whom they lived, they would have recognized their god as similar to the foreign gods. So their objection to images was confirmed. The prohibition, so frequently repeated in the Pentateuch, is like a cry of alarm against a threatening peril, and the episode of the golden calf indicates the quarter from which this danger was feared—Egypt. And as their life was hard and full of anguish, the people in their wanderings and in exile implored the protection of this god in the present. The idea of the life beyond the grave vanished, for the prolongation after death of this earthly life could not be desired by those who knew how

sad and painful that life was. And having no thought for the life beyond this world the people concentrated their attention upon the life on earth. Finding their greatness in the past, in periods of oppression they hoped for a better earthly life. Hence the two chief currents of Hebrew literature, historical compositions and prophecies. This people had a stronger sense of history than the Egyptians or the Assyrio-Babylonians. It is history in one direction, but its literature is the only one among the ancient Oriental literatures which approaches in value that of the Greeks or the Romans. Its prophetic literature too, which on a superficial examination might be reckoned magical, as by the pre-announcement it tends to assure something in the future, has never passed the horizon of earth, but has always foretold good or harm to men on earth and tried to make history beforehand. For these reasons the Hebrew literature may be considered as the greatest literature of antiquity after the literatures of Greece and Rome: like them it was not protective but narrative in character, and has thus been saved in tradition while the literatures of Egypt and Assyrio-Babylonia fell into oblivion and were only brought up again by modern erudition.

Monotheism then, with its prohibition of images, no care for the world beyond the grave, no magic sense, but a lively sense of history—this is what Hebrew civilization owes to special political conditions, and this is what it has tenaciously preserved through these political conditions. But Hebrew monotheism had ended by raising the deity too far above the earth and placing him too far from men. The Hebrew religion, therefore, though it succeeded in making individual proselytes in the midst of Oriental, Greek or Roman communities, could not advance beyond the limits of its own people. The Christian religion grafted on the stock of Hebrew monotheism the vigorous shoot of the human conception peculiar to the classical religions, or, as we might say, Hebrew monotheism was grafted upon the human quality of these

religions. It was left for the Christian religion to call down its god from the heights of heaven to earth, and to represent this god by means of art and to enable monotheism to pass along that road which it could not pass in the Hebrew religion.

V

MYCENÆAN CIVILIZATION

Extension, period and origin of the Mycenæan civilization—The gods, their symbols and images—Demons and their aspect—Funerary conception—Characteristics of Mycenæan art—Mycenæan architecture—Relations between Mycenæan and Greek civilization.

BESIDES the Egyptian and the Assyrio-Babylonian a third great civilization existed in the Mediterranean basin, that of Mycenæ. This discovery is another conquest of modern archæological research. Before this revelation the miracle of Greek civilization, which had suddenly appeared on the horizon with its monuments of art and literature perfect from the beginning, was attributed to the special natural gifts of the race. Research into the origins of a people can usually only inquire into the secondary causes which have favoured the development of their culture, the means at our disposal not allowing us to inquire into the special predisposition of the people for that culture. But the apparently marvellous origin of Greek civilization is cleared up when we find that the Greeks are heirs of an earlier culture in the basin of the Ægean.

Extension, Period and Origin of the Mycenæan Civilization.

The explorations which have been carried on for the last thirty years in the Peloponnesus, in Attica, Thessaly, the Troad, the Sporades, the Cyclades, and Crete, round the coasts of the Ægean and that bridge of islands which connects Asia Minor with Greece, have revealed the fact that contemporaneously with the flourishing of Egypt and Babylonia

there developed in the basin of the Ægean a no less wonderful civilization which only fell into oblivion because its memory was overpowered by the vivid light of the Greek culture which followed. This civilization may be termed Mycenæan, from the city where the most precious monuments were first discovered, Ægean from the sea on whose shores this culture was developed, Cretan from the island which was certainly its centre of irradiation towards the Ægean, or Minoan from the mythical personage who had made Crete the base of a thalassocracy. The fact that it presents exactly the same characteristics in all the different sites where it is found proves that it is the work of one particular people and not the result of commercial relations or artistic importations. A comparison with Egyptian chronology, rendered possible by the finding of the cartouches of the kings of the Middle and of the New Kingdom, shows that this civilization was already flourishing in those regions, or at least in Crete, in the third millennium before Christ, that it was still flourishing, especially on the coast of the Peloponnesus, in the time of Amen-hetep III and Queen Thi. A relative chronology of the strata shows that this civilization was destroyed by violence, through fire and plundering, towards the end of the second millennium B.C.

It is a disputed point to what people this civilization belonged. It is only possible to settle the question by study of the architectural and sculptured monuments and of the objects in general which are found sparingly in the palaces but plentifully in the tombs, though the written documents and the inscribed tablets which are found in great numbers among the ruins have resisted every attempt at interpretation and still maintain the secret of the language and therefore of the ethnical origin of these people. But this resistance of the inscribed documents is an indication that the culture was pre-Greek, not Greek. To this we may add that it moved from south to north, from Crete towards the Ægean, in the opposite direction to that in which Greek civilization must have moved, and that Crete

is the point of radiation of this culture towards the Ægean, but is not its primitive home. This must perhaps be sought on the coasts of Syria and Palestine by way of Cyprus.

It is therefore impossible to know to what race it belonged, but there is reason to suppose that its destruction was caused by an invasion of the Greeks and that the Greeks built up their civilization upon its ruins.

Above all the reasons which we need not enumerate, there is one argument which brings evidence to prove that this civilization is not Greek but that the Greeks assimilated its principles; it is the argument to be drawn from a study of its religion. In the absence of inscribed documents that can be interpreted, we can only study the question with the aid of the monuments showing figure subjects, but this evidence is enough to show how far removed is the Mycenæan religion from that of Greece.

The Gods, their Symbols and Images.

The picture of this religion which we can reconstruct will be made up of fragments and will have more shadows than lights, but the essential outlines are not lacking and serve to determine its fundamental conception.

We will say at once that this conception is not derived from the Egyptian, which was absolutely materialistic, but tended more to that of Chaldæa, which was spiritual and symbolical. In the Mycenæan religion the gods were honoured under symbols. If we can no longer uphold the theory once held,* that the cult of the empty throne existed among the Mycenæans, that is, the cult of an invisible divinity who was supposed to sit on this throne during the ritual ceremonies, and if it is doubtful whether the column and the pillar when they appear on the monuments are always symbols of the divinity † or if they are a simple architectural detail, it is undeniable that the double axe, the

* W. Reichel, *Ueber vorhellenische Götterculte*, Wien, 1897.

† A. J. Evans, *The Mycenæan Tree and Pillar Cult*, London, 1901.

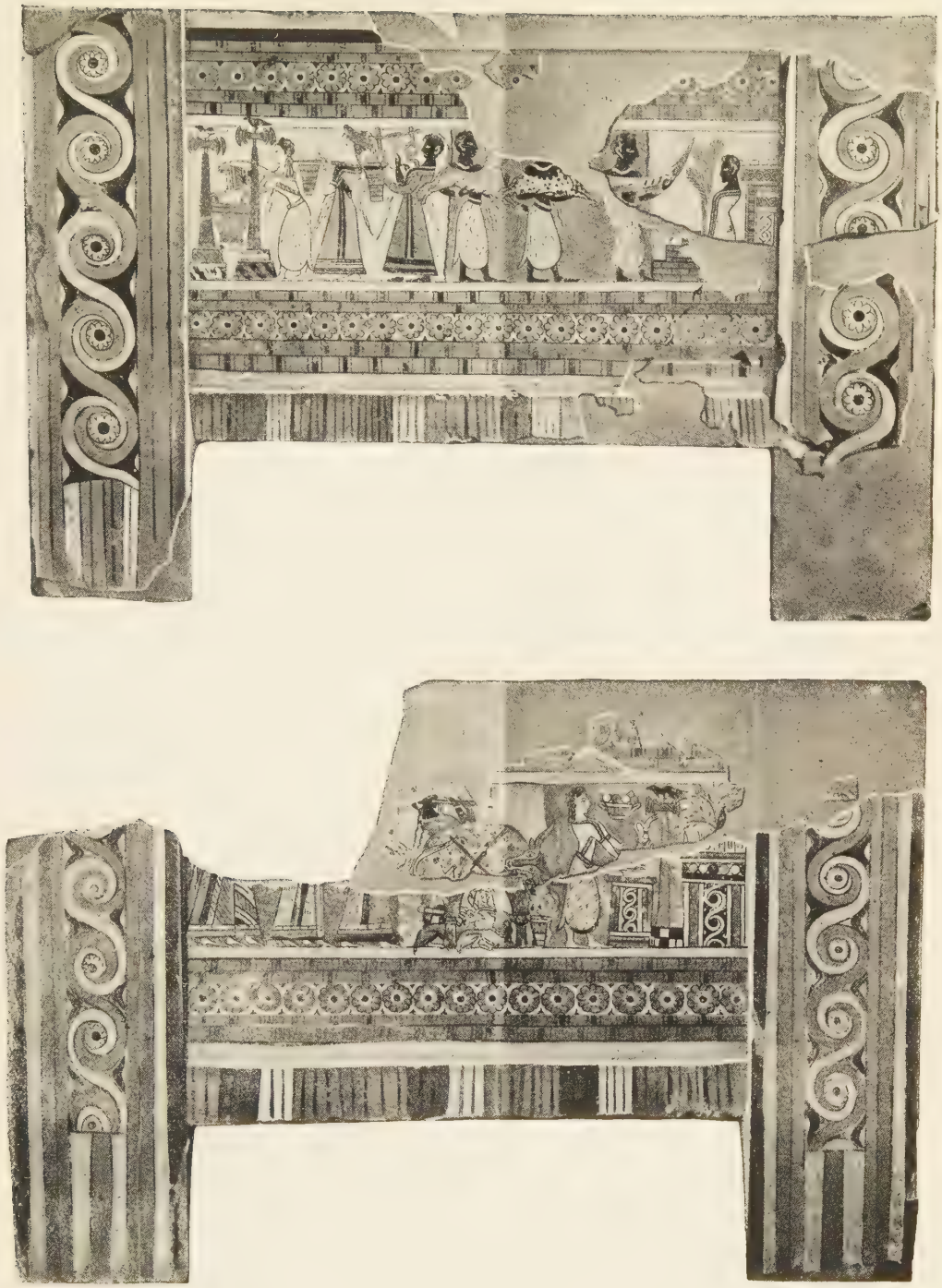

FIG. 42.—OFFERINGS TO THE DEAD AND SACRIFICE TO THE GODS.

Sarcophagus of Haghia Triada. (Museum, Kandia.)

(*Paribeni*, "*Mon. dei Lincei*," xix., pl. 1, 2.)

[*See pages* 153, 165]

To face p. 152.

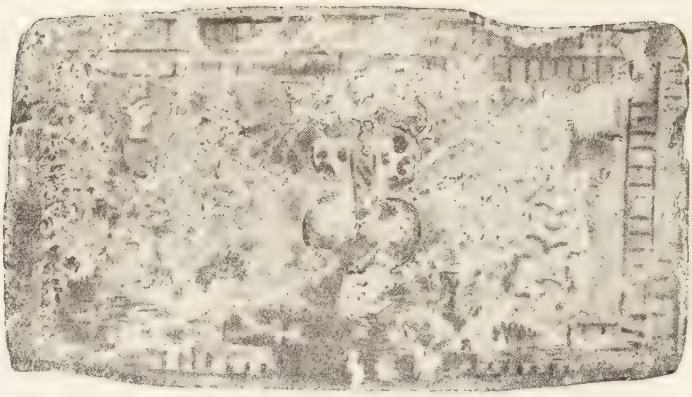

FIG. 43.—RELIGIOUS CEREMONY BEFORE THE BILOBATE SHIELD.
Fresco from Mycenæ. (National Museum, Athens.)
(Ἐφημ. ἀρχ., 1887, pl. 10, n. 2.)

FIG. 44.—RELIGIOUS CEREMONY BEFORE SYMBOLS.
Gold ring from Mycenæ. (National Museum, Athens.)
(*Furtwaengler*, "*Gemmen*," pl. ii., 20.)

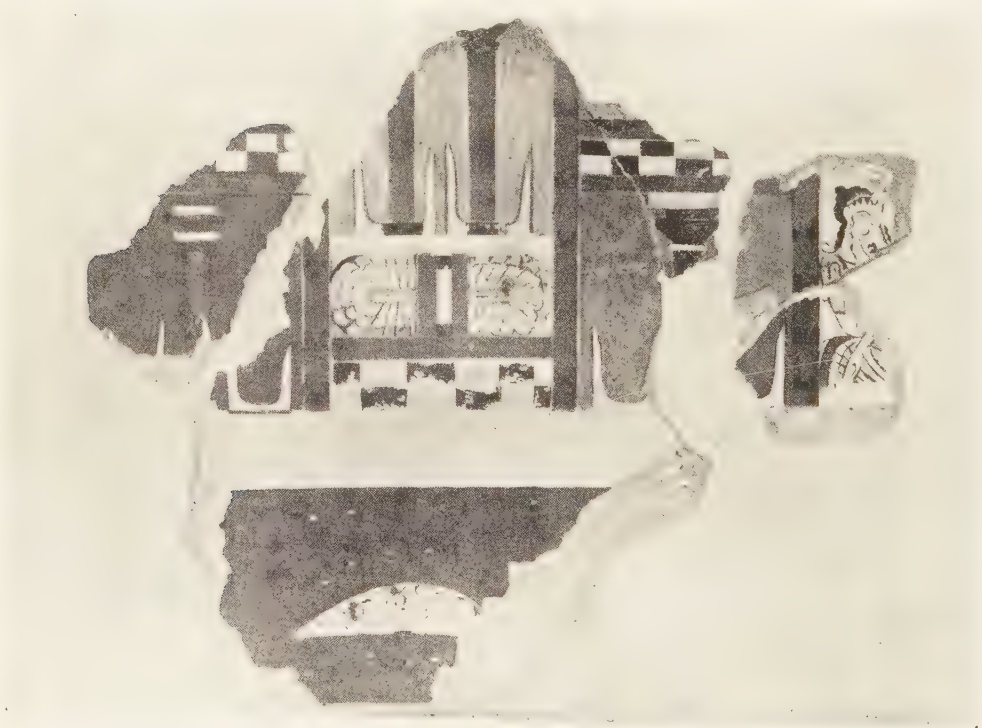

FIG. 45.—SACRED EDIFICE.
Fresco from Knossos. (Museum, Kandia.)
(*Evans, J. H. S.*, 1901, pl. 5.)
[*See page* 153.]

bilobate shield, the tree, and the bird upon the pillar are symbols under which form the gods were honoured. For the double axe we have the wonderful complete scenes on the sarcophagus of Haghia Triada (Fig. 42), for the bilobate shield the painting (Fig. 43), and the gold ring of Mycenæ (Fig. 44), for the bird on the pillar two terra cottas from Haghia Triada,* for the tree one side of the sarcophagus of Haghia Triada, besides rings, gems, and seal impressions. If the bilobate shield is rather a palladium or armed figure, that takes nothing from its symbolic value, for, as we have already seen in the case of the goddess Gula or the god Ashur of the Chaldæan religion, a human figure may stand as the symbol of a divinity. That the protome of an animal may have been the symbol of a Mycenæan divinity like those of the Chaldæan religion, is suggested by the bull's head with the double axe between the horns which we see represented on various monuments.

But besides the divinities represented by symbols we must also record the invisible divinities whose presence was imagined near an altar surmounted by a special object in the form of horns, the so-called horns of consecration. The horns are not in this case symbols of the deity but are only part of the altar decoration and therefore partake of the general character of the altar. They appear, however, on the altar even when the tree and the support with the double axe are placed near the altar as symbols of the divinity, as may be seen on the sarcophagus of Haghia Triada.

And an invisible divinity or divinities must be imagined as present near that special tripartite religious edifice known from the fresco at Knossos (Fig. 45), and from the gold plate from Mycenæ (Fig. 46). The presence here too of the horns of consecration in considerable numbers, not only on the lower story but also on the upper story of the edifice, marks its sacred character. In the gold plate from Mycenæ this sacred character

* R. Paribeni, in *Mon. ant. della R. Acc. dei Lincei*, 1904, xiv., c. 747, f. 43.

is confirmed by the figures of birds, doves, ravens or eagles, which surmount the edifice. It is at present impossible to decide what is the function of the column repeated in the lower compartments, whether it is an architectural detail or a symbol of the divinity.

When a religion like the Mycenæan cult (and we have learned this too from that of Chaldæa so far as we know anything of it) prefers to represent the deity by symbols rather than by an actual image, this presupposes a spiritual conception of the deity himself. Not that the deity is not imagined under some form—it is inherent in the idea of a divinity that it should be conceived of in some form—but that form is held as superior to what could be presented by a plastic image.

A motive found in the design of some Mycenæan rings is in agreement with this symbolic conception, if these designs have been correctly interpreted: this design shows in the upper part in a ritual scene a small *eidolon* of the divinity, a real and actual "theophaneia" or revelation of the god (Fig. 47).* The artist has made evident, necessarily under the form of a figure, the vision of the god, a superfluous vision if the ritual scene had been carried on before an image. The *eidolon* who hovers above the world as the protector of mortals is a characteristic sign of the spiritual conception of this religion.

This spiritual character seems still more clearly indicated by the fact that two of the Mycenæan symbols, the double axe and the bilobate shield, are not beings in nature or organic products, but objects manufactured by man. When celestial bodies or beings are found as symbols in a religion we may suppose that men really worship them not as symbols but as actual divinities, that they are in fact at the stage of the totemic compact with these beings or these natural phenomena. The same uncertainty cannot arise in the case of human

* G. Karo, in *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, 1904, vii. 143 ff., f. 23 f.

FIG. 46.—SACRED EDIFICE.

Gold plate from Mycenæ.

(National Museum, Athens.)

(*Schliemann*, "*Mycenæ*," fig. 423.)

FIG. 47.—APPEARANCE OF A DIVINITY.

Gold ring from Knossos.

(*Evans, J. H. S.*, 1901, s. 170, fig. 48.)

FIG. 48.—VOTIVE IMAGES FROM THE SANCTUARY OF THE PALACE.

Knossos. (Museum, Kandia.)

(*Evans*, '*Ann. of British School*," viii., s. 99, fig. 56.)

[*See pages* 153, 154, 155.]

FIG. 49.—SERPENT-CHARMER.

Knossos. (Museum, Kandia.)

Evans, "Ann. of British School," ix., s. 75, fig. 54 b.)

FIG. 50.—DOVE GODDESS.

Gold plate from Mycenæ.

(National Museum, Athens.)

(*Schliemann, "Mycenæ,"* fig. 268.)

FIG. 51.—CYBELE (?) BETWEEN THE LIONS.

Impression of a ring. From Knossos.

(Museum, Kandia.)

(*Evans, "Ann. of British School,"* vii., s. 29, fig. 9.)

FIG. 52.—GODDESS WITH BIRDS.

Gem from Vaphio.

(National Museum, Athens.)

(*Furtwaengler, "Gemmen,"* pl. ii., 29.)

[*See page* 156.]

products—the human product always suggests a creator who is a man himself—and in the case of weapons of war such as the axe or the shield—some one to use them—an active divinity is presupposed, a divinity who has an established form but would substitute for his form the symbol of his activity.

Here we touch on a second essential point of the Mycenæan religion in which it resembles the Assyrio-Babylonian religion. The cult of the divinity under a symbol does not, as we have seen, prevent it from being imagined under a special form and being sometimes represented in this form. I do not, however, think that we shall solve the problem for certain by the examination of these little images which, either on account of the emblem of the serpents or the gestures of the figures, have been supposed to be idols.

Leaving out of the question the figures which, like the so-called "Bayadere" of Berlin,* were found alone and therefore tell us nothing of their primitive function, I think that in some cases the appearance or decoration of the figures would prevent our considering them as idols. Take, for example, the figures which were found in a sanctuary of the palace of Knossos (Fig. 48), together with horns of consecration still showing traces of the worship of the double axe. I will not use the argument of their rough make, though in so rich a civilization it would at first sight seem as if these could not have been the cultus images; but as the palace was sacked the images of greater value may have been stolen or destroyed. Their appearance alone, however, shows that they are not votive images of the divinity but votive images of the worshippers. They represent the act of adoration made perpetual by means of the figure. I see the gestures of a worshipper in the figure with the arms raised, also in that which has the arms bent towards the breast, and also the posture of an adorer in

* G. Perrot, Ch. Chipiez, *Histoire de l'Art dans l'Antiquité*, Paris, 1894, vi. 749 ff., f. 349 f.

the figure facing the observer with the head turned to one side. This was, in fact, so placed on the floor of the sanctuary, the head being turned as if to worship the religious symbol of the double axe which stood close by.

Also I think we have not sufficient grounds for deciding that the figures with serpents (Fig. 49) are goddesses: they may simply be worshippers carrying out an incantation or mortals attempting a dangerous practice of suggestion like the ancient Psylloi whom tradition placed on the shores of the Great Syrtes. Traces of an original totemistic compact with serpents are probably preserved in this practice.

But if we eliminate some figures of doubtful interpretation there still remain many which on account of external indications we must recognize as deities. Among these we must first of all mention the nude goddess, with doves on her head and shoulders, stamped out in gold leaf, which was found in a tomb of the Acropolis of Mycenæ (Fig. 50). The nudity of the figure and the presence of the doves leave no doubt that it is a goddess and these characteristics recall the Assyrio-Babylonian goddess Ishtar, the Syrian Astoreth and the Cypriot Aphrodite.

Other goddesses may be recognized in the figure between the lions (Fig. 51), and in the one holding by their necks two aquatic birds (Fig. 52). The former recalls the later representations of the goddess Rhea-Cybele and the latter those of the so-called Persian Artemis. Other divinities may be found in the subjects of other rings or gems of which the interpretation may be more difficult but which show cultus scenes apparently held not before invisible deities, but in the presence of divinities in human form.

Once this religion permitted the representation of the gods in a concrete form other than symbolic we cannot deny the existence of idols, that is, of images used in the cult. We find here phenomena parallel to those which we found in the Babylonian-Assyrian religion, the use of symbols, representations of

the divinity in real form and cultus scenes before an image, and the same relation may here be noted between the three phenomena: the use of the symbol is most frequent, the representation of the divinity in actual form is not very frequent, worship before an image is rare.

The Mycenæan and the Assyrio-Babylonian religions seem to meet in two other points—in the absence or rather the limited existence of a mythology of the gods which might give inspiration to plastic art, and in the exclusively anthropomorphic conception of the divinity.

In connection with mythology it may be noted that certain scenes have been interpreted as mythological after comparison with later Greek mythology, but there is no valid reason for this interpretation. The greater number of the scenes in which the divinity is present, visible or invisible, represent cult scenes or offerings by mortals. It is therefore probable that all the other scenes in which the religious element is undeniable are also cult scenes. We have seen that cult scenes are frequent in Assyrio-Babylonian art and especially as here in the gem engravings.

For a mythology of heroes it seems that we have no documents, for all the scenes of action in Mycenæan art in which we see fighting, hunting, triumphal marches or snaring of animals show clearly that the actors in them are mortals, not heroes.

With regard to the anthropomorphic conception of the divinity it is obvious that a symbolic religion, a religion which confesses its incapacity to render the essence of the divinity in plastic form, would not in this conception go below the lowest limits of anthropomorphism. And the monuments prove this theory. We can say that no Mycenæan god is presented in a form containing animal elements. In fact, in those figures of deities to which we have already referred, where they are shown in connection with wild animals we find the indication not only of the

anthropomorphism of the divinity but also of his dominion over the animals.

Demons and their Aspect.

By keeping the divinity within the circle of anthropomorphism it was possible for the Mycenæan religion, as well as the Assyrio-Babylonian, to distinguish the demons from the gods by their outward appearance. Only the demons have the animal form in Mycenæan art. But not all the monsters who appear with animal features in Mycenæan art are demons. Many of them appear to be artistic fancies created as designs for seals, to give an individual impression not easy to imitate, like the "grylloi" of classical times. These fantastic forms are simple combinations of different members, mostly ill-assorted, to which are added elements from the vegetable world and they never possess an organic constitution. If we pass in review the sculptured monuments of the greatest religions we shall see that however unbridled a fancy was brought into play, all the creatures who were created either as gods or demons with a mixture of parts taken from men or animals, always have an organic constitution, that is to say, none of their necessary limbs are absent and they are not arbitrarily combined—they are capable of living in the natural world. The fantastic creatures of Mycenæ, on the other hand, do not correspond to this: for example, the forepart of a bull, of a lion, or of a stag is attached to human legs so that the monster walks on these and holds up his beast's paws (Fig. 53); two heads of a bull and an antelope with a long neck stand on human legs while the beast's paws hang useless (Fig. 54). These creatures who are confined within the small circuit of a gem would be useless as demons because they could do nothing: when standing upright they possess useless and pendent organs and the paws of a beast: when prone they do not know how to dispose of their human legs. Even those among the monsters who have the appearance of an organic constitution

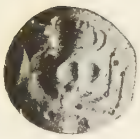

FIG. 53.—IMAGINARY CREATURE.

Gem from Crete. (Coll. Pauvert de la Chapelle.)

FIG. 54.—IMAGINARY CREATURE.

(British Museum.)

(*Furtwaengler, "Gemmen,"* pl. ii., 40, 41.)

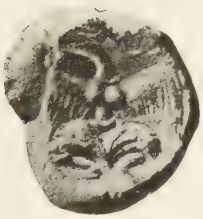

FIG. 55.—THE WOMAN-EAGLE.

FIG. 56.—THE MAN-GOAT.

FIG. 57.—THE BIRD MASK.

Impressions of rings from Zakro.

(Museum, Kandia.)

(*Hogarth, J. H.S.*, 1902, pl. vi., 20; vii., 34, 57a.)

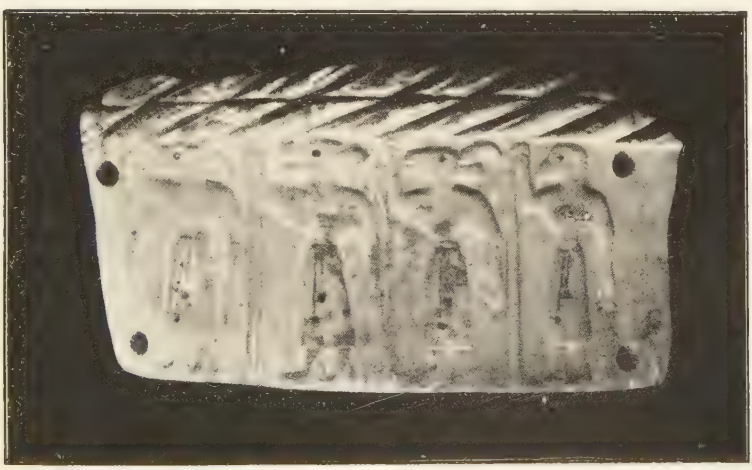

FIG. 58.—DEMONS.

Shell from Phaistos. (Museum, Kandia.)

(*Pernier, "Mon. dei Lincei,"* xii., pl. 8, n. 1.)

[*See pages* 158, 159, 162.]

To facep. 158.

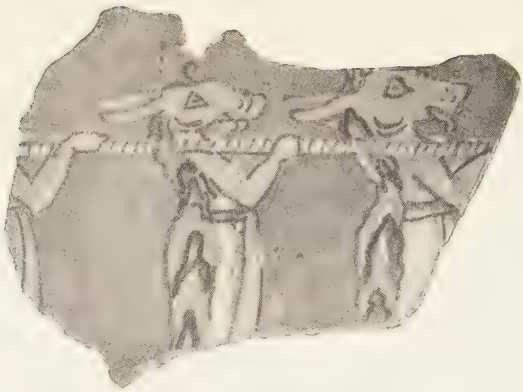

FIG. 59.—DEMONS.

Fresco from Mycenæ. (National Museum, Athens.)

(Ἐφημ. ἀρχ., 1887, pl. 10, n. 1.)

FIG. 60.—DEMONS PERFORMING LIBATIONS.

Vitreous paste from Mycenæ.

(National Museum, Athens.)

(*Evans, J. H. S.*, 1901, s. 117, fig. 13.)

FIG. 61.—DEMONS MAKING LIBATIONS.

Gem from Vaphio.

(National Museum, Athens.)

(*Furtwaengler*, "*Gemmen*," pl. ii., 32.)

FIG. 62.—DEMON.

Impression of a ring from Knossos.

(Museum, Kandia.)

(*Evans*, "*Ann. of British School*," vii., s. 18, fig. 7a.)

[*See page* 163.]

like the woman-eagle (Fig. 55) and the man-goat (Fig. 56), show in the substitution and degeneration of some of their parts,* as seen in various examples, that they do not need them as essential members. What shall I say of the so-called mask of a lion and birds of which no one knows the object as a demon because it could never move?

A second reason, the direct consequence of their inorganic constitution, is given by their position, and helps to prove that these monsters are creations of art. They appear to be thrown into the space of the gem as if they had no resting-place by means of which they could balance themselves; their very position shows that they could do nothing.

Two other facts also show that they are purely artistic creations—their symmetrical construction and the numberless varieties of the same type. They are mostly designed on the usual antithetic system of gem technique. The impression, like the image reflected in a mirror, reverses the design—makes the right appear left and *vice versâ*, and this has given rise to the idea of cutting on the seal two equal figures in opposite directions. It is evident that the so-called heraldic disposition is derived from the technique of gem cutting, when we observe that the seal was probably first required to confirm an order, and this is all the more probable when we observe that the most ancient known type of heraldic composition, the two-headed eagle, is found in Chaldæan art, that art which shows in its cylinders the earliest type of seal and that the principle of symmetry of design is largely applied in its seals. These fantastic creatures are designed after this principle. For example, from a single pair of human legs spring two necks and two animals' heads in opposite directions, and the antithesis is carried so far that from being formal it becomes ideological, that is, one head appears in profile and the other full-face. One pair of paws hangs down and one pair is suspended in the air. And that this symmetry was practically the result

* D. J. Hogarth, in *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 1902, p. 79 ff., t. vi. f.

of the technique of gem cutting may be assumed from the fact that these monsters, even when they were not created with artificial symmetry, are always arranged with all their parts symmetrically disposed within the surface of the gem.

Finally, the extraordinary variety of these creatures in surroundings of the same type proves them to be purely artistic creations. No two of these monsters correspond exactly in all their parts. In some cases they are formed on a general principle, but we always find the addition or variation of some element so that there is no absolute identity. We know, on the other hand, that a religion which has created supernatural beings follows the conservative principle which is the essential foundation of tradition, and fixes the form of these beings once for all, and never modifies it, for to modify their form would be to destroy the faith of the people. Religion never leaves it to the judgment of the artist to change a type fixed by tradition, though the artist is certainly the chief collaborator in the religious conception. The Egyptian religion set the example in this, though it multiplied to exaggeration the number of its gods. Art was able in various ages to embellish and humanize supernatural beings—this we see in Greek art—but it does not touch their essential constitution. This traditional persistence does not apply to the fantastic creations of Mycenæan art; in their case we rather find the inclination to modify their form, and the modification is so exaggerated—it sometimes goes as far as an unrecognizable geometrization—that if we were not sure from the circumstances of their discovery that many seal impressions are more or less contemporaneous we should think that there were centuries between them, so great is the degeneration of forms. This modification is therefore the result of a voluntary and intentional design of the artist.

To the arguments based on irregularity of form, abnormal position, symmetrical construction and variety we may add another fact to prove the artistic origin of these monsters.

They appear exclusively on seals while there exist for the same period Mycenæan statuary, reliefs and paintings which present all the forms of this civilization. This fact is all the more important as we see that on the other hand the figure of a real Mycenæan demon, to which we shall refer shortly, is represented not only on seals but also in painting and in vitreous paste.

In conclusion we must therefore omit from the list of beings in Mycenæan religion a number of those fantastic monsters which adorn the seal stones and which at first had seemed to show this religion to be one of the most largely provided with demons. And we can understand how the Mycenæan artist could gratify his fancy in the composition of these monsters by means of animal elements, when we observe the position of the animal in this art and civilization. I have already said that in the figures of women with serpents there may be a trace of an ancient totemistic compact, and we cannot deny that there are remains of a totemistic conception in those female figures standing between lions or holding birds fast by the neck, which we pointed out as goddesses. But beyond these and possibly other traces we observe that in this civilization and therefore in this religion the animal has not that sacred character which involves such timorous respect in the religion and civilization of Egypt. Egyptian art does not know the beast as an element of decoration, it has never been able to forget that its gods were chiefly animal, and it has never been able to remove the tie which connected the animal with divinity. Mycenæan art, on the other hand, has a predilection for the figure of the animal and treats it exclusively as a subject of decoration. It loves to represent it in the pasture or hunting, alone, in groups, and in zones; it grasps the life, whether it is a wild cat in ambush behind a shrub watching a pheasant, or cats hunting water-fowl by the river; in fact it sees in the beast a subject for representation not an object of adoration. From these Mycenæan works of

art representing animal life breathes the spirit of the Homeric images: all record of a totemistic compact, of respect towards a protecting animal, has completely disappeared. The frequent use of animal forms as a decorative element in later art is due to the position taken by this religion, and therefore this art, towards animals. For if the bands of animal figures constitute a decoration characteristic of the orientalized art imported possibly from Cyprus into Crete and the coasts of central Italy in the seventh century B.C., and if they are used also in the so-called Corinthian pottery, if they were imitated in the indigenous products of Italy and out of Italy and if they are also preserved in a type of Attic vase of the middle of the fifth century B.C., all this is owing to the persistence of the Mycenæan tradition. A religion and a civilization like that of Egypt could never have favoured the development of such a decoration.

This explains how the Mycenæan artist was able in the creation of his fantastic monsters to use beast forms so extensively and so unscrupulously, and confirms, if there were need of confirmation, the anthropomorphic and spiritual foundation of the Mycenæan religion. I note that the Assyrio-Babylonian religion must have held the same position towards animals, for in that system of art also we find decorative bands of animals.

But Mycenæan religion had also its real demons, and in them the beast element necessarily prevailed. It cannot be stated for certain that the four figures carved in relief on a piece of shell found at Phaistos (Fig. 58) are Mycenæan demons, for their relationship to the demons of the Babylonian charm tablets (Fig. 41) has been suggested, and it may be an imported object. The costume of the figures and their style mark a difference between this work and the characteristic products of Mycenæan art.

But one figure resembling a beast but erect, and apparently having a sort of natural shield on its back, sometimes with

a border of points and sometimes with markings like a hide, must be a Mycenæan demon. It is represented in painting (Fig. 59), on vitreous paste (Fig. 60), and frequently on gems (Fig. 61). It has a head whose features are not clearly distinguishable—the head of an ass, of a lion, of an ox, of a horse, or of a sow? It presents itself differently to the well-intentioned interpretation of the inquirer, but in reality is always the same head, which assumes, according to the capacity or incapacity of the artist, lines suggesting more or less these different identifications. Is it the head of an animal of a species now extinct, or is it a creation of fancy which has preserved vague features of some existing animal? The case of the head of the Egyptian god Set, which in the distance recalls that of an ass but is not quite to be identified with it, presents an analogy in agreement with both the one and the other hypothesis.

That this theriomorphic creature is not a god but a demon may be deduced from two facts: first its appearance, not isolated but in groups of two or three, and next from certain functions performed by it. Its individuality is characteristic of divinity even among a polytheistic people. When we see appearing on the horizon of the religious conception a pair or a triad of identical beings we may be sure that they present themselves as of an inferior grade to the divinity, that they are figures of demons. The religion of classical Greece shows the clearest examples. Besides that, these Mycenæan creatures appear performing those same libation ceremonies as human beings are seen performing elsewhere before an invisible divinity in front of an altar with the horns of consecration and a bush. They are therefore worshippers, and a god never worships another god.

Near this demon as to whom there is no doubt, stands another figure, perhaps a demon also, with erect figure and a head whose features are not to be clearly distinguished; this is the figure seen in some impressions and rings (Fig. 62).

It has a tail and it is difficult to make out if the front or hind feet are those of a human being or of a beast. Some have tried to recognize in this figure the prototype of the classical Minotaur, but the bull's head is wanting.

The Mycenæan religion knows also those fantastic theriomorphic creatures, the griffin and the sphinx. The special importance in the religious conception of the griffin, a leonine monster with an eagle's head, is proved by the presence of a chariot drawn by griffins on one of the ends of the sarcophagus from Haghia Triada, and that it was a monster sacred to some god is shown by a gem in which a griffin is attached to a chain held by a figure in a long robe, possibly a god.

The significance and value of the sphinx are doubtful. This creature cannot be identified with the sphinx of Egyptian art, for there it is usually masculine and originally represented the royal and divine dignity of the Pharaoh; here, on the other hand, it is always feminine. That the Mycenæan sphinx is of Asiatic and probably Babylonian origin has been maintained in connection with a small sphinx found in the palace of Haghia Triada that cannot be distinguished from similar Babylonian monuments.

To make out the Mycenæan funerary conception is still more difficult than to determine the conception of a divinity.

Funerary Conception.

The rich collection of grave furniture found in the tombs, especially in those of the Acropolis of Mycenæ, indicates that the dead required this outfit for the life beyond, and that therefore this second life was imagined more or less as a continuation of this earthly life. It is very little to know when we consider that this idea is either openly or in disguise at the root of the funerary conception of nearly every race. But we might add, using a negative argument, that there is no trace in Mycenæan religion of that minute and superabundant care for the dead which is peculiar to the Egyptian religion. In this, as in the conception of

the divinity, Mycenæan religion keeps distinct from the materialism of the Egyptian, while it inclines towards the spiritualism of the Babylonian religion. In one element only does this funerary conception seem to recall that of Egypt, that is in the care taken to preserve the appearance of the dead body by the use of a funerary mask, if indeed the mask was placed directly upon the face of the corpse, which is a doubtful point.

It is impossible to say what dwelling-place was imagined for the dead beyond this world. In the decoration of a Cretan vase there is a bird which has alighted upon a fish and, as has been suggested, we must recognize in similar subjects on other vases and coffins the journey of the bird soul towards the seat of the blessed beyond the sea.*

But a monument from Crete, the sarcophagus from Haghia Triada (Fig. 42), has fortunately thrown some light on the problem. It may be more or less under discussion as to whether the subjects belong to the Egyptian conception or if they herald the later Greek conception, but it is certain that in this a scene of offering to the dead is connected with a scene of sacrifice and libation to the gods. The half of one side is occupied by the scene of offering: the dead man, wrapped in a woolly mantle which gives him a mummiform aspect, stands before the door of his sepulchre; he is separated by three steps from three persons bringing offerings; they carry a boat and two calves. The other half of this side presents a scene of libation: a woman is pouring liquid into a vase placed between two supports surmounted by the double axe, upon each of which stands a bird, perhaps a raven, the symbol of the divinity; another woman behind the first is carrying the pails, while the lyre-player accompanies the action with his music. The other side is entirely taken up with the scene of sacrifice and offering. Before an altar surmounted by four horns of con-

* L. Savignoni, in *Mon. Ant. della R. Acc. dei Lincei*, 1904, xiv., c. 567 ff., t. i. f.

secration, near which stand a tree and another support with the double axe and the bird, a woman is making an offering from an oinochoe perhaps of part of the blood which has been collected from the wound of the sacrificed bull, while three couples of women approach the table of sacrifice and the flute-player sounds the double pipes. The two ends, not shown here, are occupied by chariots, in each of which are two persons; one is drawn by horses, the other by griffins. It is possible that one figure in each of the two chariots or even both represent the divinity who is symbolized on the sides by the support with the double axe and the bird. Though this sarcophagus indicates that offerings were made to the dead and that these offerings were accompanied by sacrifices and libations to the gods, it throws no light on one point, that is, when these ceremonies took place. Did they take place when the body was placed in the tomb—once only? Or were they repeated on certain anniversaries—are these offerings which are never to be lacking in the future? It is an important question, for in the first case this monument records an action already past, in the second, these offerings are assured to the defunct for all future time by the magic power of the figures. Both solutions are possible, for in the religious and funeral art of Egypt, which as we have seen was exclusively preoccupied with the future life, we find scenes such as the carrying away of the dead and his reanimation on the bed of death, which indicate a past episode with relation to his future life, though it was an episode in the future at the moment of the death of the individual. But in this case I think it is a question of offerings and sacrifices imagined as periodic in the future, as by his attitude and costume the dead man almost seems to have been called up out of his grave. Mycenæan religion in its funerary conception appears to have been arrested at that stage at which we find the funerary conception of the Egyptians and in general that of all races which had not yet developed

the historic sense, that is, it appears to be arrested at an exclusive preoccupation for the future fate of the defunct.

The funeral stelai of the Acropolis of Mycenæ can throw no light on this subject. Though the artist has tried as far as possible in the stele with the hunting scene and in that with the battle scene to record episodes in the past life of the dead man, these scenes may have been used with a purely decorative object, like the designs used on daggers, gems and other monuments. Also the date of these stelai is doubtful and the works themselves seem to be stylized products of a decadent art. Their purely decorative character might be confirmed by those stelai from the same excavations which are decorated only with spiral designs.

One fact still remains to be stated: Mycenæan religion, like that of Babylonia and unlike that of Egypt, has only dedicated a small number of its monuments to funeral rites.

Characteristics of Mycenæan Art

With our limited knowledge of Mycenæan religion we cannot hope to define the influence which the religious conception must have had upon the development of art shown in the representation of figures. What we know—and it is not a little—of Mycenæan civilization and art is an infinitesimal part of what this civilization and art must have been before they attained to the creation of those productions which seem so perfect and which are the most ancient they can show. We know what Mycenæan civilization and art have created in the basin of the Ægean: all that must have preceded these works in their country of origin has hitherto evaded our search. And we can deduce from the character of its religion that this civilization must be able to boast of hundreds, if not thousands, of years of earlier development. I do not consider that the development of psychical phenomena has any fixed unity of measure, but a religious concept like the Mycenæan—based upon the worship of the gods by means of symbols, and attributing to these gods a highly spiritual character which has kept within the limits of anthropo-

morphism in its conception of the divinity and, as its purely decorative use of the figures of animals shows, is far removed from any idea of totemism—represents such a high degree of psychical progress and emancipation of the spirit from primitive and timid religious ideas that we cannot err in assigning a long period for its development.

This is confirmed by art—this marvellous Mycenæan art which is far superior to Egyptian art in its feeling for nature and life, and which differs so greatly in choice of subjects from Greek art, and shows such technical perfection and such naturalness that we must conclude that it was preceded by a long period of development.

We are in ignorance as to how the religious conception has influenced art in the distant past before the time of the monuments known to us. The great monuments of Mycenæan art give the impression of the luminous autumn of a great civilization. Life is here taken in its real aspect and not in order to serve for magical practices as with Egyptian funerary groups and paintings, but because of the artist's love of art and for the expression which he has succeeded in drawing from his subjects.

Allowing for the differences which depend on the interval of thousands of years and the diversity of artistic means, this art may be compared both for its passion for detail of landscape containing scenes of hunting and pastoral life, often with a touch of genre, and for its generally non-religious character associated with refinement and minuteness of detail, to Hellenistic art in pagan times or to modern art in the seventeenth century. Even when religious subjects are treated, such as the serpent-charmer of Knossos, it is done without much religious feeling. The figures are so charming and coquettish that one feels a breath of the profane spirit. In the paintings of the Haghia Triada sarcophagus, too, which are certainly by a mediocre artist, the scene is enlivened by the grace and refinement of non-religious art so as to make one almost forget that it is a sad funereal function. Compare this sarcophagus with the Egyptian

funerary paintings and reliefs, even those in which there is much movement in order to ensure benefit to the dead man, and the difference in the spirit of the two kinds of art will be apparent.

Here, too, we recognize that, as in the case of the Chaldæan religion and art, this approach of Mycenæan art to nature and therefore to a better knowledge of the forms of men and animals must have been favoured by the religious conception. A form of religion which avoids the concrete representation of the divinity though it does not prohibit the practice of art, places this art in a privileged position for the study of nature in comparison with those creeds which, like that of Egypt, place art exclusively at the service of religion. In this case art is regarded above all as decorative, and represents forms expressly to represent them, not to fulfil a useful action by means of the image. And this is the great difference between Egyptian and Mycenæan art.

Mycenæan Architecture.

In architecture too we see the effects of this levelling of connection between religion and art. Mycenæan civilization, in fact, knows no temples, it has no buildings intended, for the secret assembling together of the faithful in the interior. The cult was carried on in the open air in the sacred enclosures, among the plants, near the altars. The only characteristic religious edifice of this civilization is that tripartite construction with columns and horns of consecration represented in a fresco at Knossos (Fig. 45), in gold plates from Mycenæ (Fig. 46) and in ring settings. But this building must have been an altar, though somewhat more complicated and of greater size than usual, for the proportions are shown by the juxtaposition of the female figures in the Knossos fresco and of the birds in the gold plates from Mycenæ. That it was an altar is proved by the fact that the ceremonies are not performed within it but around it.

We find an indirect proof in the Palace of Knossos that special enclosed places were not made during the Mycenæan

civilization, for the sanctuary there is in a very small and modest room and very mean in comparison with the halls intended for the pleasures of earthly life. It seems rather a place of deposit for religious objects than a sanctuary for the practice of the cult.

The funeral architecture is equally modest. On the Haghia Triada sarcophagus the dead man appears before the door of his tomb (Fig. 42), but up to the present no such structures have been discovered with similar doors. In any case they must have been tombs with a single chamber. The only characteristic type of funeral monument created by this civilization is the "Tholos," or cupola-shaped tomb. It seems to be a derivative of the tumulus and only appears as a complete architectural structure in the late Mycenæan age with the Treasury of Atreus at Mycenæ and the Minyas Treasury at Orchomenos.

Both in the case of buildings dedicated to the gods and of those intended for the dead Mycenæan architecture seems poor, as if it had been able to derive no inspiration from religion. Its great glory shines forth in the construction of the palaces. It is a non-religious architecture and, we must add, it is not regulated by the will of princes desirous of appearing to the people almost as gods. The Cretan palace is not private and closed in like a fortress, as are the palaces of the Assyrian kings. It has no surrounding wall and is open on every side. We may say that this is partly due to the peace and security of the country, as the later palaces of Tiryns and Mycenæ on the continent owe their strong walls to the fear of attack, but the open plan of the palaces of Knossos and Phaistos reflects the character of this civilization, which, though dynastic and princely, did not isolate the prince from the people as a divine being, but must have kept him in constant contact with them. In fact, one part of the palace forms a sort of connecting link between the people and the prince. It is an open space bordered by two tiers of steps and would be used for meetings or spectacular performances, and is in contact with the surrounding country.

And the indications of the type and arrangement of the palaces are confirmed by the decoration of the interior. While it was on the one hand unconnected with religion, on the other it was not, like that of Assyrio-Babylonia, bound to the dynasty. No painting, relief or furniture has, up to the present time at least, given reason to suppose that this art was at the exclusive service of the prince. The subjects treated by it are connected with nature and with mankind in general and not the glorification of a dynasty. Mycenæan art in the broadest and noblest sense of the word is an art of the people.

But this art being bound neither to the religion nor to the prince had to disappear with the civilization without leaving noticeable traces even in tradition. Some few ideas probably passed into the Greek religion, new princes established their rule in this same region, but art, unconnected with either, fell for ever. We can indeed say that Greek art can only be comprehended on the understanding that it was preceded in this same region by Mycenæan art, that the ancient artistic spirit must have remained latent in the population, that some regions like Ionia and Attica, which were first called to take a great part in artistic creation, must have preserved this substratum of the ancient population more pure than the other States, and we may assert that certain motives have been handed down by uninterrupted heredity, but when we come mentally to connect the Kamares vases with the earliest ceramic products of classical Greece, the cups from Vaphio with the earliest archaic reliefs, the statuettes of the serpent-charmers of Knossos with the earliest Greek statues of the type of the Nikander of Delos or the Hera of Samos, we must agree that the latent artistic spirit in command may be the same but the art has taken a different direction.

Relations between Mycenæan and Greek Civilization.

And it was bound to be so, for the character of the two civilizations was profoundly different, above all in the religious

conception and by the position taken by art with regard to religion.

The attempts which have been made in the study of the Mycenæan religion to discover in what it differs from the classical Greek religion and in what they agree have, I will not say solved the problem, but have left it as solved by the theory of a direct and undoubted derivation of the Greek religion from the Mycenæan. Zeus, Rhea, Artemis-Dictynna are deities whom classical Greece must have received directly from Mycenæan civilization. Doubtless the essence of some of the gods of the Mycenæan period is preserved in the Greek gods of Olympus and especially in the local Cretan gods, and there probably remains in some place as a sporadic phenomenon the cult of a divinity represented by a symbol; but it is also undeniable that if we examine the two religions as a whole as far as the representation of the divinity is concerned they appear to be separated by an abyss.

The Mycenæan religion appears to have been a religion which concealed under a symbol a spiritual conception of the divinity and gave the preference to cult scenes before an invisible deity: on the other hand the Greek religion has been from its origin anthropomorphic and in no wise symbolic, and has continued the same throughout its historical course. Its gods possess attributes, but these attributes never become symbols to be adored alone, separately from the figure of the god. There was never a cult of the thunderbolt or the trident in classical Greece as there was in Mycenæan Greece of the double axe and the bilobate shield.

Finally the clearest proof of this transformation of the religious conception lies in the traditional Greek method of representing figures of the gods. Cult scenes in which mankind placed itself in relation with the god are rare in comparison with representations of the divinity himself in action, and when the people would call on their gods for help as in the votive reliefs, the worshippers preferred to have the figure of the divinity

before the altar to which they brought their offerings. The greater size of the divinity thus represented is the only indication of anthropomorphism where emblems are little used.

Mycenæan religion was therefore transformed and materialized when it became the Greek religion. The new people who gave life to classical Greece above the ruins of Mycenæan civilization either desired to see in actual form the gods whom they took over from the subject people, and who had been hidden by the latter beneath symbols, or they sought the help of art to render their own gods visible. In the one case or the other we must acknowledge that the two religions have come into agreement on the neutral ground of anthropomorphism, and that on this ground they have preserved not only the gods but also the demons. It is certainly not by chance that with the exception of the Minotaur, which had a bull's head on a human body, and a few other creatures of the same description with a beast's head on a human body, which rarely appeared in Greek plastic art, all the other mixed creatures have the head or head and trunk human upon a beast's body. Silenus, the Centaurs, the Tritons, Acheloos, Pan, Typhon, Cecrops, the Sirens, and the rest are all formed in a similar fashion to the Sphinx, that creature of mixed form which Greek civilization inherited from the Mycenæans.

But if Greek religion represents as far as we can judge a materialization and humanization of the Mycenæan religion, that is, a concession made by a superior but subjugated civilization to a rude but victorious people whom the former had been forced to accept within their domain, we must remember that the whole course of Greek religion, humanistic and formal as it is, is accompanied by a hidden subterranean current of more spiritual tendency—that of the orphic doctrines and the mysteries. Possibly through them something more of the Mycenæan religion may have been preserved.

VI

GREECE

The gods in the Homeric poems—Funerary conception in Homer—Absence of religious art in Homer—Independent origin of Greek art—Votive figures and images in Greek art—Religious decorative art—Characteristics of mythological art—Subjects of mythological art—Course of mythological art—Frieze of the Parthenon—Idealism of form in mythological art—Idealism of form in the figures of the gods—Decadence of mythological art—Mythological influence upon the votive offering—Elogium of mythology—Funeral pottery—Funeral stelai—Mythology in funerary art—Greek architecture—Greek literature.

THE dividing line between Mycenæan and Greek culture is occupied by the Homeric poems. For some students they are the testament of Mycenæan civilization, for others they are the morning hymn of Greek civilization. Both ideas may be right, for Homeric civilization reveals in all its details the latent contrast between the setting of an ancient civilization and the rise of the new. But the new or Greek element has a wider extension than the old, which we may suppose to have been Mycenæan.

The Gods in the Homeric Poems.

This is more easily seen in the religious conception than elsewhere. If it is not true that Homer created the gods of Greece, the Homeric conception is nevertheless the foundation of the later Greek religion.

The Homeric poems reveal the complete triumph of anthropomorphism in the gods. They are imagined as equal to men both in power and proportions. Only in rare cases is stature or strength greater than that of man attributed to the

gods. When Ares is wounded by Diomed he cries out like nine or ten thousand men in battle, E 859–861, and the same thing is said of Poseidon when he is encouraging the Achæans to fight, Ξ 147–151. Hera has to take an oath with one hand on the earth and the other touching the sea, Ξ 272–273, and Poseidon passes from Samothrace to Aigai in three steps, N 17 ff. But for all these cases there is a possible explanation which, if due allowance be made for poetic exaggeration, makes it unnecessary to attribute superior stature to the gods. Only in Φ 407 is there a precise indication of greater stature. When Ares fell to earth in the fight of the gods he covered seven acres of ground. This must be an exaggeration, for when in another part Ares was fighting with Diomed, E 825 ff., it is not stated that he was taller than his adversary.

But is it the case that the Homeric poems show traces of a conception of the gods other than human in form? The two adjectives *βοῶπις* and *γλαυκῶπις*, the former an epithet of Hera, the latter of Athene, have given rise to such a conjecture. According to the old interpretation the former was supposed to signify "with round eyes like those of an ox"; the second "with blue or shining eyes"; but according to a new theory the one signifies "ox-like in appearance," the other "like an owl," suggesting an original representation of the gods under an animal form.

This theory does not seem to me probable, as I do not believe that the cases in which gods were changed into birds could suggest this idea. If Athene and Apollo change themselves into vultures and place themselves upon a beech-tree to watch the duel between Hector and Ajax (H 58–60), if Athene appears to Odysseus and Diomede as a heron (K 274–276), if Hypnos coming to Ida to send Zeus to sleep takes the form of a kite (Ξ 290 f.), if Athene when she leaves the house of Poseidon to go the ship of Telemachus becomes a vulture (γ 372), or if Athene looks on at the death of the suitors from the roof in the form of a swallow (χ 240), these cases do

not indicate an ancient theriomorphic conception any more than the other cases where the swiftness of the flight of the gods is compared to that of birds. The gods assume the shape that suits them at the moment, according to circumstances, and when they wish to look on at some spectacle, or approach without being seen, they change themselves into birds, just as Aphrodite takes the form of an old woman to present herself to Helen (Γ 385) or Hera encourages the Achæans under the figure of Stentor (E 784), Poseidon reveals himself to the Achæans in the form of Kalchas and in that of Thoas (N-O) and other similar cases (X 226 ff., α 105). And their power of taking the form of various different birds besides their own human form proves that here we are far from a theriomorphic conception of the gods, otherwise they would always be tied to the same form. We note on the contrary that Athene takes the form of hawk, heron, vulture and swallow.

Traces of the Mycenæan religious conception, that is of a cult of the gods under symbols, have been suggested by the characterization of one hero of the *Iliad*. Ajax, son of Telamon and father of Eurysakes, son of the "pillar" and father of the "broad shield," suggests two elements of the Mycenæan cult, the pillar and the bilobate shield.* And the adjective χρυσόθρονος, generally applied to Hera, is understood not to apply to the material fact of the magnificence of the throne on which the goddess sat but to preserve possibly in an unconscious poetic conventionalization the mention of the supposed Mycenæan cult of the empty throne.†

Finally the beech of Zeus is said to relate to the Mycenæan religion either as a symbol of the divinity or simply as a sacred tree (E 693, H 60).

But besides these traces and others still more doubtful the anthropomorphism of the gods of Homer is well established. The gods in fact appear in person to men, and though they

* P. Girard, in *Revue des Etudes Grecques*, 1905, p. 1, ff.

† W. Reichel, *Ueber vorhell. Götterculte*, p. 53 ff.

often only allow themselves to be recognized by the person to whom they address themselves—for example, Athene when she converses with Achilles (A 194 ff.) or speaks to Odysseus (B 166 ff.)—and they always reveal their divine majesty, their human appearance is taken for granted.

This anthropomorphism of the gods enables them to fight with men and even to be wounded by them: this happens to Aphrodite and to Ares (E 330 ff., 846 ff.).

And their anthropomorphism brings as a consequence that the gods have the same sentiments and perform the same actions as men. Olympus is in a constant state of quarrelling and rebellion. For the Trojan War the gods divided into two parties. Hera, Athene, and Poseidon favour the Achæans, Ares and Apollo favour the Trojans. Zeus, who ought to be the chief ruler of events, favours the Trojans to please Thetis, but cannot do violence to fate, which is stronger than he is. And not only are the gods in opposition on account of the Trojan War, but Zeus and Hera from a spirit of contradiction show the example of a family in constant disagreement. Hera can plot to deceive Zeus (Ξ 153 ff.) and Zeus goes so far as to threaten to beat her and reminds her that he once left her hanging from heaven (O 16 ff.).

After all this it seems natural that the gods should joke like men, and that as Thersites excites the laughter of the Achæans when he is beaten by Odysseus (B 211 ff.), Hephaistos excites the laughter of the gods in council when he goes limping round mixing the drinks (A 599 f.), and while the episode in which Menelaos seeks for his adversary Paris when the latter has been safely hidden by Aphrodite in the bed of Helen (Γ 448 ff.) is full of subtle irony, the scene in which, amid the salacious comments of Apollo and Hermes, Ares and Aphrodite are taken in the net of the betrayed Hephaistos (θ 266 ff.) is animated by coarse joviality.

But besides the anthropomorphic character of the gods of Homer we must note their wide scene of action. They are not,

like the gods of the Egyptian religion, gods whose action is completely absorbed by the periodic repetition of the natural phenomenon over which they preside, or inactive gods who are content with protecting men by their existence. The gods of Homer are constantly in movement, help man with all kinds of action and act as guides in peace and in war, and whether invoked or not they are always present.

But mankind whom they help so directly is not contemporaneous with the poet, but is mankind of a past age—heroic humanity. The action is not present, but past. Here we note the commemorative and historical character of this conception of the gods, the characteristic which from the time of Homer onward has remained the foundation of the Greek religion.

The life of classical Greece, beginning with the Homeric poems, does not open, like the life of Egypt and Babylonia, with works which invoke the present help of the gods, with hymns and prayers for protection, but with the record of the good or evil that they have done to men who lived many centuries earlier—the record of that which is past and therefore irremediable.

This commemorative character in the conception of the divinity is evident in the Homeric Hymns if they are really productions of Homeric literature and not later works : in them the god is invoked, not to ask material help, but to relate some event of his life.

And the Homeric poems interest us more for what they allow us to read between the lines than for what they offer. If the poet has no need to present his gods to the reader and if the episodes of which he treats take place in conditions that he imagines to be known to his hearers, this means that they were already known at least in oral tradition if not in similar songs. The Homeric poems presuppose a wide diffusion of myths among the people.

And not only myths of the gods. If Achilles occupies his forced idleness in his tent by singing to the lyre of the deeds

of the heroes (I 189), if it is elsewhere said that the myth of the Argonauts is celebrated by all (μ 70), if the allusions to the facts of the Theban cycle are far from rare (Δ 376 ff., Z 222 f.), and if the labours of Herakles are remembered (B 659 f., Ξ 249 ff., O 24 ff.), this signifies that though these indications may belong to more or less recent fragments, all the other fundamental myths of classical Greece, as well as the Trojan myth, were already widely diffused.

We shall perhaps never know why the first and greatest poem of Greece is occupied by so unimportant a subject as the contest between Agamemnon and Achilles, an episode which arises long after the beginning of the Trojan War and ends long before the war ends. But from this very position of the *Iliad* in relation to the myth we can understand that the dawn of Hellenic civilization must have seen an extensive production of myth from a series of traditions on the works of the gods and heroes.

Funerary Conception in Homer.

The Homeric poems therefore, being a reflection of the traditions diffused among the people rather than the arbitrary creation of a single individual, have given the impulse to the whole religious conception of Greece, and have given it a mythical and narrative character, not the ritual and imperative character of the primitive religious literature of Egypt. And as they have fixed the conception of the gods, they have clearly delineated the character of the funerary conception, the fate awaiting man after death.

The funeral rite in Homer is that of cremation: the bodies were burnt. This rite takes it for granted that the dead go to the land beyond the tomb not in their actual body, but in spirit. This is indicated by the words spoken to Odysseus in Hades by his mother Anticleia when he had tried three times to draw her to him (λ 219 ff.): "When one dies the vital force no longer occupies the flesh and blood, but these

are overcome by the violent ardour of the fire when the spirit has left the white bones, and the soul flies away like a dream." The rite of cremation is based therefore on a conception the opposite of inhumation and especially of the careful preservation of the body which was peculiar to the Egyptians. The practice of inhumation allows the inference that the dead continue to live in their bodies in the life to come. The two different rites agree with the difference of the general religious conception, for there is sometimes a connection between them and the manner in which offerings are made to the divinity. Where cremation exists, as in the Homeric civilization, sacrifice to the gods is offered by means of fire, for in that way the spirit of the offering reaches them, but where the custom of inhumation prevails, as in Egyptian civilization, the offerings are made in concrete form. The use of fire for sacrificial purposes in Egypt was a late introduction due to foreign influence.

We must observe that cremation was in use in the intermediate period between the Mycenæan age when inhumation was the custom and the classical age of Greece when inhumation again became prevalent. We can understand this when we consider that the rite of cremation was that of the invading people who destroyed Mycenæan civilization and established that of Greece, and that the rite of inhumation which belonged to the subjugated people gradually returned to favour. This is the reverse of the process which took place in Etruria, where the rite of cremation, customary in the Villanova period, gave way to the rite of inhumation of the invading Etruscans but again became prevalent in the latest Etruscan period. But the most interesting point in the religious conception of Greece, however it may be explained, is that when the original rite of inhumation was substituted for the Homeric rite of cremation it had already been deprived of that materialistic character which it must originally have had, and the rich supply of funeral furniture which distin-

guished the tombs of the Mycenæan age was no longer found. Greek civilization, whether it practised cremation or inhumation, was henceforth only preoccupied with the spirit, the soul.

This is quite in agreement with what we gather from Homer as to the fate of the soul after it has left the body. The soul keeps the appearance of the individual in life, but this appearance is not real ; it is only an image and therefore the ψυχή is at the same time an εἴδωλον (comp. λ 475 f., ω 14). Under the guidance of Hermes the soul descends to the dwelling of Hades, god of the dead, and here in the fields of asphodel leads a life which cannot be called either a reward or a punishment for the good or evil done in the earthly life.

The dead have nothing to do in Hades, and their predominant thought is regret for this life. Achilles answers Odysseus, who called him blessed because he had been honoured in life and now dominated over the dead (λ 488 ff.): "Speak not to me of death, O glorious Odysseus, I would rather be servant of a poor and unknown man on earth than rule over all the dead." And while conversing together the souls always turn to the memory of that which was their lot on earth and are anxious to know what their descendants are doing. Achilles compassionates Agamemnon for the sad fate destined for him after his return from Troy, and Agamemnon congratulates Achilles because he died fighting under the walls of Ilion and describes the magnificent funeral which his mother Thetis had given him (ω 15 ff.). Agamemnon inquires about his son Orestes (λ 457 ff.) and Achilles is glad to learn from the mouth of Odysseus that his son Neoptolemus has fought bravely (λ 492 ff.). The dead cannot even forget what they have suffered on earth: the soul of Ajax son of Telamon passes disdainfully before Odysseus as he is still annoyed about the contest for the arms of Achilles (λ 541 ff.). And if the dead continue to do anything, what they do is the shadow of

what they did on earth: Herakles, for example, is still armed and ready to shoot off an arrow just as on earth (λ 601 ff.).

A world of the dead which gave neither rewards nor penalties, which condemned the spirits to inertia, and had no characteristic for the common dead must, if it was to be populated, contain mythical personages, who could keep their individuality even in the next world. The description of Hades thus becomes a commemorative review of heroes and heroines and accentuates the past rather than the future.

This, then, is the Nekyia of the *Odyssey*, the episode which may be regarded as the *Book of the Dead* of the Greeks. The different parts of this book are not all of the same date; they contain contradictions and incongruities such as are found in all funerary conceptions, not least in that of the Egyptians. But the Nekyia is based upon a mythical and commemorative stratum.

We can better estimate the value of this book if we compare it with the funerary books of the Egyptians, leaving the circle of Greek civilization and its derivatives to examine this phenomenon from outside when confronted with other religions. Only thus can we see what this simple canto of Homer represents for the story of human civilization. There is none of the magic which predominates in the Egyptian funerary books: the book seeks to assure nothing to any one in the world to come. It promises no rewards, threatens no penalties, nor does it point out in minute detail what should be done to find favour with the god of the dead. This book therefore never had the fate of the Egyptian funerary books: it was never deposited as a viaticum in a Greek tomb. It is nothing but a great review of the illustrious dead. Take the first figures that appear there: Elpenor, the companion of Odysseus, who died in the house of Circe during the hero's absence; his mother Anticleia, who died of grief at her son's absence; Tiresias, the seer, of whom he asks information as to his fate on earth in the future; the spirits whom Odysseus sees pass

before him are those of celebrated heroes and heroines, heroes of yesterday and heroes of fabulous times, but all personages who stand there to attest the greatness of the past. Women too pass by, wives of gods and mothers of heroes. And then appear the Trojan heroes, Agamemnon, Achilles, Patroklos, Antilochus, and Ajax Telamonius, and finally Odysseus sees Minos, Orion, Tityus, Tantalus, Sisyphus, Herakles, Theseus, Pirithoos. We can hardly believe that this multitude of heroes and heroines belonged to the original Nekyia. Several superposed strata may easily be distinguished, but none of these strata has modified the character of the preceding one. The Nekyia in its earliest conception was mythical and commemorative and such is its character through all the later stratifications.

Besides, the very manner in which this descent to Avernus is composed shows how it differs from the Egyptian idea. The funeral books of Egypt describe and represent as a real thing the journey of one single dead man to the world of the dead. There is nothing grand or heroic in this journey, for all men, rich or poor, powerful or humble, must take it. The Nekyia, on the other hand, is the descent of a living man into Hades, it is the perilous undertaking of a hero and already in itself a past adventure. The world of the dead, as described by Homer, has a fabulous character like that of the country of the Lotus Eaters or the Lestrigoni, in fact like all the regions visited by a bold hero, and the minutely real character proper to the Egyptian conception is here absent. It is in substance a myth, a thing past, not a reality, a thing present and future.

This characteristic of the Homeric funeral conception is a great conquest of human civilization, the first suppression of the magical element in the cult of the dead; and this conquest has not only been effectual in Greek and Roman civilization but became the inheritance of the whole Christian civilization. The sixth book of the *Æneid*, describing the descent of Æneas into Avernus, and the visions and journeys into another world

of the Latin mediæval legends, lead up to the *Divina Comedia*, which, with a different moral, social and political intention, is the journey of a living man in the underworld, and a review of a crowd of historic personages; in fact, a narrative poem rather than a ritual work. This is due to the direction of the impulse given to the funerary conception by Greek civilization—to the fact that in establishing a mythical world of the dead it opened the way to a historical world of the dead.

Thus, recapitulating what we have deduced from our examination of the Homeric poems, we can say that Greek religion appears to be mythical in character from its origin both in its conception of the gods and in its funerary conception. It appears at the gates of history in a different stage from the other religions of antiquity. But the data we now possess do not permit us to decide the problem as to whether the nature of its religious conception was partly inherited from Mycenæan civilization and re-elaborated during those dark ages from the destruction of Mycenæan civilization to the first appearance of the monuments of plastic art of classical Greece, between 1100 and 700 B.C., which saw the composition of the Homeric poems, or if it was in reality the patrimony of that invading people of Arian race which founded the civilization of classical Greece. Comparative mythology has failed in its attempt to reconstruct a nucleus of gods and myths common to all Indo-European peoples; and on the other hand the absence of any literary Mycenæan tradition prevents us from ascertaining what things go back to that civilization. We can only say that this religious conception has left its imprint on the whole course of Greek civilization and especially upon the art of Greece.

It is now necessary to consider the relation between this conception and the plastic art of the Homeric period. And first we note with regard to the conception of the gods, that not all religions have felt the need of plastic art.

We need therefore feel no wonder that though the anthropomorphism of the gods was fixed and accentuated, we have in the poems only one record of the cult of images. This record of the existence of a statue of Athena on the Acropolis of Ilion (Z 92, 273, 303) belongs to one of the most recent passages of the *Iliad*, a passage in which the record of the gift of a peplos to the statue of the goddess recalls one of the Athenian customs at the great Panathenaic festival. The Athenian influence is also shown in this passage by an examination of the linguistic elements.

Absence of Religious Art in Homer.

Now must we believe that this absence of other record of images is only due to the fact that the Homeric poems had no occasion to allude to them? Or must we see in this the reflection of a condition of Mycenæan civilization which has been already recognized, the absence of a cult of images? This cult is not so unimportant a matter in the civilization of a people that the absolute silence of the Homeric poems on the subject can be attributed to chance. And still less can it be attributed to chance when we find in many parts of the poem references to the cult of the gods, and as mention is made of the sacred grove and of the altar, the images of the gods, if they existed, would have been mentioned also.

We have every reason to believe that this absence of a cult of images in Homer is an inheritance from Mycenæan civilization, or rather that the Homeric poems reflect that period of transition from Mycenæan civilization to classical Greece during which the new imported gods or the ancient gods held in honour established their anthropomorphism, their earthly character, in the minds of the people in contradistinction to the spiritualism of the Mycenæan divinities. And there must have been a period of transition in which the cult of images was not yet established; this may be deduced also from the fact that when the cult of images begins in Greece, if we may judge by the testimony of the monuments which we possess,

these images have no external resemblance to what we know of Mycenæan art. Certain attributes, the presence of the lions on the figure of Cybele, or of wild animals on the figure of the Persian Artemis, may go back by tradition to the Mycenæan civilization, but the form is different: the increased rudeness of the work is an indication that here begins a new life.

But the very appearance of a cultus image marks a break in the world of ideas between Mycenæan and Greek civilization. A civilization which passes from the cult of the gods under symbols to the worship of the gods in the form of images, which in fact makes itself idols, makes a step backwards in the religious conception and recognizes in the image a magical function which was absent from the cult with symbols. For if it is always protection that is asked of a divinity, both in a religion with the use of symbols and in a religion with images, in the cult with symbols this protection is expected from something outside the symbol itself, while in the cult with images the protecting power of the divinity is through the correspondence of form easily identifiable with the protective power of the idol itself. In some cases the power of the divinity may be identified with the power of the symbol, but this is a deviation from the original idea and is a reduction of the symbol to a fetish, and cannot therefore be compared to the identification between the divinity and his image which is almost imposed by the nature of the image itself, by the reason of its existence.

We saw that the absence or limitation of image worship does not exclude the representation of the divinity in cult scenes or actions performed by gods and this, which is certainly the case in Assyrio-Babylonian and Mycenæan art, might be the case in Homer if we are to recognize in the shield of Achilles the reflection of real works of plastic art and not rather a poetic description like that given by Dante of the reliefs which adorn the floor and walls of the first circle of Purgatory (*Purg.*, X, 28 ff.). In the description of the shield Ares and Athena are said to be represented at the head of an army advancing to lie in ambush

(Σ 516). By some authorities this detail is thought to be an erroneous interpretation and it is supposed that instead of two deities it should be two leaders * represented in an actual work of art, but as there is nothing contrary to the Homeric conception of religion in this representation of the gods, I think it is simply a poetic description, so similar is it to the descriptions of the intervention of the gods in human enterprises found in other parts of the poems. Besides, the description of the shield of Achilles, if it must be considered as the reflection of actual works of art, can only be reflecting works of the Mycenæan period, for only in that period could the original subjects and the technique be found. This representation therefore of the gods with their Greek names cannot throw any light on the plastic art which must have been inspired by the religious conception of the Homeric period.

And as we find no testimony in Homer as to any monuments of plastic art in connection with the conception of the gods, beyond the indication in Book Z, so also we find no mention of works of art inspired by the funerary conception. We learn that the ashes of the dead were deposited in chests or amphoræ of value (Ψ 92, 243, 253, Ω 795, ω 74), and that besides the tumulus a stele used to be erected upon the tomb (Λ 371), but there is no mention of figure decoration upon the body of the chest or vase or stele, nor is there generally speaking any trace of the use of funerary art. When Elpenor wishes a record of his old profession of seaman to be placed upon his grave, he can only ask to have an oar fixed on the tumulus (λ 77). We shall shortly see that classical Greece could honour a warrior who had perhaps lost his life among the waves with a very different memorial (Fig. 117).

Though we have made it clear that the Homeric poems laid the foundations of the whole religious conception of Greece—

* W. Reichel, *Homerische Waffen*, Wien, 1901, p. 162 f.

that is, they established the anthropomorphism of the gods and the mythical character of all their actions, the slightness of the care for the life beyond the grave and its commemorative character — they are absolutely silent as to the inspiration which these ideas may have given to plastic art. The Homeric poems reflect a period of transition from Mycenæan to Greek civilization but they reflect only the first stage, that in which the anthropomorphism of the gods was established and their mythology delineated. The second stage in which this anthropomorphism and this mythology take a plastic form is beyond the limits of the Homeric civilization; it covers the seventh and sixth centuries B.C., the period during which the Homeric poems were practically fixed, and if they received additions and modifications of a certain value, a somewhat archaic tendency was generally impressed on these additions so that they did not modify the character of the civilization they describe.

Independent Origin of Greek Art.

Besides, we must at once add that the Homeric poems could not have given the inspiration to art for the figures of the gods. It is a common saying that Homer gave its gods to Greece. He gave to Greece the fundamental principles of its religious conception, or rather he reflected that conception as it was established in the mind of the people, but contains neither the description of a single feature of the face nor the indication of a shade of colour which might serve as a starting-point for a figure representation. With the data furnished by Homer as to the gods we might have both the gods which classical art has created and an infinite number of other representations of them. What is lacking in Homer in his description of the figures of the gods, and of the human figure in general, is the plastic and colour element. His adjectives are stylized and when they really touch the field of human form, as in ἠύκομος "of the beautiful hair," λευκώλενος "of the shining arms," καλλιπάρῃος "of the beautiful cheeks," βοῶπις "of the round eyes," γλαυκῶπις "of the blue eyes," if the two last may be thus interpreted, the subject is touched

with such vague and general data that it is impossible to derive from them a concrete image.

True we must not ask of literary art more than it can give. The description of figures by means of speech must always be approximate and indecisive even when intentionally minute, but the Homeric poems, marvellously expressive as they are when they describe sentiments or actions, are weak and pale when they describe form and colour. Later admiration may have said that Phidias had taken his inspiration for the creation of his Zeus at Olympia from the lines of Homer which describe the son of Kronos who makes Olympus tremble (A 528–530), but these lines, in which the descriptive element is reduced to "dark brows" and "divine hair falling from the immortal head," could never have caused the image of his "Father of the Gods" to arise in the mind of Phidias if he had not relied on a long established tradition of the figure rather than on literary elements.

In fact this must be made clear: if the Homeric poems reflect the religious conception of Greece at the dawn of her civilization, the figures of the gods and in general of all the products of religious art as far as the form, not the subject, is concerned have been given to Greece solely by the modest and laborious attempts of the artists, whose independence must be revindicated. There may have been reciprocal influences between literature and art at various times, but their course has been parallel, and when art has once received the initial impulse and declared its reason for existence, it has completed that course to the end with full logical sequence.

We will now see how far those characteristics of the religious conception which were already fixed by the Homeric poems have been maintained and what modifications they have received.

As in the preceding cases we must examine this art from the point of view of the subjects treated and the influence of the nature of the subject upon the choice and treatment of form. The personality of the artist disappears to a great extent behind

his work, not, as in Egyptian art, because once the work has left his hands he must detach himself from it so as not to disturb the new relation established between it and its possessor, but because the artist in this case only follows the general trend of his time and has therefore little opportunity of impressing his own individuality upon the work.

As a result of this inquiry we find our estimate of the importance of artistic individuality much reduced, and a precise division into periods is relatively of no greater value, for no contingency of time has deviated or arrested the course imposed on Greek art by its religious conception. Innumerable secondary causes have contributed to regulate the details of this course, but the progressive idealization of the human figure and the gradual humanization of the gods—the chief points in the development of Greek art—occupy the whole duration of this art and thus confirm its unity of time.

Leaving aside therefore all distinction of schools or periods of time we will first follow the current of art applied to the representation of the gods and their actions up to the time when it shows itself as again endowed with creative power, and after this we will follow the whole current of funerary art up to the same limit.

Votive Figures and Images in Greek Art.

When we say that the Greek conception of the divinity is mythical from its origin, that is, that it chiefly regards the past actions of the gods, we do not deny that the Greeks looked on them as protectors, whose aid it was necessary to ensure for the present and the future. And the rudeness of all the earliest productions of Greek plastic art contrasting as it does with the refinement of the earliest literary productions of this people—the Homeric poems—suggests that the Homeric poems possibly owe their origin to the needs of a rich and noble class whose sentiments and actions they reflect, while these productions of Greek art for religious purposes were to supply the wants of

the people of the lowest culture. This theory is in fact supported by the appearance of a cult of images, after a period, such as that reflected in the Homeric poems, during which this cult did not exist.

Religious art may therefore be considered as a product of popular origin in Greece, which the people in time imposed on all classes so as to make it a requirement of the national life. This theory of origin explains why art has never been at the service of princes, nobles, or rich men but always remained an art of the people.

If Greek art is of popular origin the people must have made use of it not for the sake of beauty or expressiveness, but rather to obtain advantage. Its first productions that we can certainly call Greek are votive offerings. The use of votive figures was known in Greece even at a time when cultus images had not yet been created. The people must have offered to an invisible deity the image of the beings for whom they desired the protection of the deity. This is proved by archæological facts, for the most ancient figures that we possess are poor clay or bronze images of men or animals, and came to light in the lower strata of the sanctuaries of Olympia or Delphi. The Greeks began their art production with the votive image, the worshipper dedicated his own image or that of his family or his flocks that they might be protected by the god, and also made use of the votive image for the life beyond the grave—at least we may conclude so with regard to certain figures representing women employed in washing or kneading bread, which were discovered in the tombs. It began at the point where all people without culture begin—at the magical force of the image, and began with works whose rudeness was equal to that of other races.

After the votive offering we see the cult image—the idol—appear in Greece. But while the rudeness of the first votive figures may give the impression that they are the spontaneous products of this race through direct contact with nature, the same thing cannot be said for certain of the first great statues

which are found in Greek art. Certain traits of relationship with the figures of Egyptian sculpture have been pointed out in these statues, and as their type, which was diffused over the whole basin of the Ægean, seems to have been derived from a single centre, Crete,* it is not impossible that the inspiration, though only the inspiration, of these works came from Egypt through that island and possibly through another intermediate island, the isle of Cyprus.

But the question is whether this inspiration came through votive figures or idols. In the most ancient Greek sculpture it is not always possible to say if the figure before us is that of a mortal or of a divinity, if it is a votive statue or an image. Given the purely anthropomorphic conception of Greek religion and the necessary limitation of a primitive art to a few types, there are no exact marks of distinction between a mortal and a divinity. The greater part of the idols must certainly have disappeared either because later images were substituted for them, or because they have been destroyed on the site of the cult with the destruction of the civilization to which they belonged, but the description which we have of these idols corresponds so closely to the archaic statues which we possess that the suggested interpretation is a legitimate one. If the statues that have been preserved are chiefly votive statues we must recognize the influence of images of the divinity both in their size and form. The dedicator has made himself similar to the god to whom he offers himself. It is impossible to suppose that the small votive figures already recorded could have evolved into these imposing statues which are themselves votive offerings. Therefore some external influence must have caused the appearance of the types of the idols which, as I have already observed, may well have been non-existent when the people were already dedicating votive images to the invisible divinity, and the images of the divinity may have had some influence in raising the

* E. Loewy, *Typenwanderung*, in *Oesterreichische Jahreshefte*, 1909, p. 243 ff.

standard of the votive statuary, for these statues are made equal to them in size and form.

Religious Decorative Art.

Though these first works of statuary show a great advance over the small votive figures they often do not surpass or even reach the standard of the analogous productions of Egyptian art. How is it that Egyptian art stopped short at this standard of forms and types while Greek art moved past it? Because Greek religious art did not limit itself to the two creations, the votive image and the idol. Once the cult of images was introduced a house for the divinity—a temple—was rendered more than ever necessary, and then arose the wish to decorate it, to embellish this temple, and of course the subjects of the decoration must be furnished by religion. Only—and here is the great difference between the Greek religion and the religions still impregnated with magic like the Egyptian religion—this decoration must not be a completion of the work expected of the divinity, it must not help the latter to protect men, represent a cult scene, have in fact magic scope. Greek civilization by the nature of its religious conception based from its origin upon a commemorative element, had already made sufficient concession to the magic sense by giving to the people both the custom of the votive offering and the cult of images. With regard to the decoration of the temple it found the high-road already pointed out in the Homeric poems, and relates the deeds of gods and heroes—relates and does not ask. And there is so little connection between the divinity whose image is sheltered by the temple and the decoration of the temple, that from the beginning the mythical scenes which constitute this decoration have generally no connection with the god of the temple. The decoration in fact is of no use to the god, it is for the benefit of the spectator, and the spectator is interested in seeing mythical subjects whatever they may be, and whether or no the divinity of the temple has any share in

them. When he contemplates them he wonders at a past which has no connection with the present or with the future; this depends on the god dwelling in the sanctuary. At this moment he is not a suppliant.

This purely decorative character of the mythical subjects which adorn the walls of the temples and other sacred buildings is proved by their association with isolated mythical figures such as the Gorgoneion which occupies one metope of the temple of Thermos, or the Sphinx in the frieze of the temple at Assos and also in a metope at Selinus, or by their association with subjects taken from real life, such as the huntsman in one of the metopes of the temple of Thermos, or the banquet in the frieze of the temple of Assos, or the chariot in one of the metopes of temple C at Selinus, or by their association with groups of animals as on the frieze of the temple of Assos, on a pediment of the Acropolis and on one of the pediments of the temple of Apollo at Delphi. And this is the same association of mythical subjects with subjects taken from real life and animal figures which is sometimes met with in archaic Greek works of industrial art, as for example in the Chigi vase, on which we find Sphinxes, marching soldiers, a hunting scene and the judgment of Paris.

The want of connection between the divinity of the temple and its decoration shows that the idol and the decoration cannot have arisen at the same date, that genetic unity is absent. In fact the decoration of the temple is only one of the many outward manifestations of the Greek decorative spirit.

In the Greek temple two different currents meet, one rising from the midst of the populace below, the other descending from above from the rich upper classes. The one creates the idol and the votive statues, the other creates the decoration. The one is based upon the magic value of art, the other upon its purely representative value; never has this contrast been so clearly visible as in the religious edifice of the Greeks. The Greeks decorated their temples as they decorated their vases and their

furniture. The same subjects as those used to ornament the chest of Cypselus (Paus., V, 17 ff.) or the François vase formed the decorative cornice of a temple.

Now the important thing is that these subjects did not descend from the great art of the temples to be adapted to the small industrial art, but they rose from the furniture and vases to the temple. Numerous excavations have made us certain that the figure decoration was begun in the small temples and that later on it spread to the greater temples. While the great temple of Hera at Olympia shows no trace of figure decoration and we must go down to the time of Peisistratos to find the great architectural sculptures of the Hekatompedon at Athens, of the temples of Eretria, Delphi and Corfù, the most ancient architectural sculptures which have come to light at Selinus, Olympia, Delphi, Mycenæ and Athens are all of modest proportions, showing that they belong to small buildings. And, what is more important, control by means of literary tradition is possible, as at Olympia or Delphi these architectural sculptures do not belong to the temples of the sanctuary but to those small buildings termed *thesauroi* built by distant cities within the sacred enclosure and probably intended to contain precious votive offerings. In these *thesauroi* there was no image and therefore their decoration, though always taken from mythology, shows still more clearly its independence of the cult. It is therefore probable that the decoration of the *thesauroi* has shown the way to the decoration of temples. And the *thesauros* appears to be half-way between industrial art and the temple, for it only attempted to be the casket, the chest for the votive offerings which it contained, and it had no true religious function.

The relation then between the decoration of the temple and the cultus images is in Greek civilization a simple relation of propinquity. They were not born together and the decoration is later than the image. There is one fact in

Greek tradition which affords historical proof of this relation (Paus., III, 18, 9 ff.). Bathykles of Magnesia, the artist, added a throne to the idol of Apollo at Amyclæ, and this throne had a historical decoration with the same mythical subjects as the chest of Cypselus and Greek decorative art in general. The relation between the idol and the throne is a forced relation; archæologists are still discussing how the idol could be placed upon the throne.

This union of elements of different origin became closer with time, for the decoration is brought down from the walls to be concentrated upon the image itself. It is now provided with decorative parts which have no connection with the protective function which it was intended to fulfil. The Athena Parthenos of Phidias for example (Paus., I, 24, 5 ff.) had its base decorated with the birth of Pandora, while on the external superficies of the shield was a representation of fighting Amazons, on the inner edge a battle of the Giants, on the soles of her shoes a battle of the Centaurs. The Zeus of Phidias at Olympia (Paus., V, 11, 1 ff.) was decorated with the slaughter of the Niobids, with the fighting of the Amazons with Herakles, with the paintings of Panænus (Atlantis and Herakles, Theseus and Pirithoos, Herakles and the Lion, Ajax and Cassandra, Hippodamia and Sterope, Prometheus and Herakles, Penthesilæa and Achilles), with a Theseus and the Amazons and a Birth of Aphrodite—to record the principal subjects—and these mythical scenes had only a very vague and superficial connection with the two statues. Ancient and modern erudition may seek for the expression of lofty moral ideas, but the truth is that these subjects form the repertory common to the whole of Greek art, and had here a decorative function only like that of the sculptures in the metopes of the same temples which sheltered the two images. Their proximity was greater, but this did not nullify the difference of the conception to which the idol and its decoration corresponded.

Having recognized this double current of Greek art, and the fact that the cult of images sprang from the psychical needs of the people, we ask how this same civilization could show so great a passion for decoration and how this could be manifested in the treatment of religious subjects.

Now the passion for decoration is undeniably the inheritance of Mycenæan civilization. In speaking of this civilization we have demonstrated that its art belongs to a highly developed stage, that it relates for the pleasure of relating, expressing in form whatever subject of interest it finds in life. This narrative spirit has passed to Greek civilization, but during the period from the Mycenæan to the Hellenic age the character of the whole culture and specially of the religion had been transformed, and therefore when this hereditary narrative spirit had again set to work it had to find fresh material. And this material was easily found in the new religion, so far as it had woven around the figures of the gods a tissue of myth—that is of subjects adapted to narration. Thus the new art arose with the same spirit as Mycenæan art but with other material to work upon.

Characteristics of Mythological Art.

We are acquainted with this art only through a small part of its monuments, and those not always the most important; for time has destroyed for instance all the great paintings, but the scenes which adorned the vases, utensils, and those temples which still exist, may with the necessary adjustment of statistical equilibrium give a complete idea of the subjects treated, and the control furnished by ancient descriptions of the great monuments now lost to us will confirm what the monuments still preserved to us can tell.

Two essential characteristics must be noticed in this art inspired by mythology: one is the limited number of subjects, the other the complete isolation of each of them, their complete detachment from any other action accomplished either

before or afterwards. Except in the case of the heroes, Herakles, Theseus, and Odysseus, all the gods and all the rest of the heroes live in mythology and art bound to one, or to a very small number of enterprises, these being separated from each other by indefinite intervals. Greek mythology, at least as reflected in art, is a fragmentary mythology. The work of later mythographers and of artists who have been subjected to the influence of this mythographic erudition has sought to fill the lacunæ by exhuming strange myths and has attempted an organization of mythology by trying to arrange it on genealogical lines, attempting to do away with the appearance of fragmentariness by a show of unity, but the undeniable want of success of this attempt has shown that what is incurable cannot be cured.

These fundamental characteristics of Greek mythology are due to various reasons, some of which probably escape us through our scanty knowledge of the period of the passage from Mycenæan to Greek civilization. In the first place this mythology is the collective product of a people formed of small groups, each of which has elaborated on its own account the actions and enterprises of some single god or hero. Now not all the mythology of each group has become the collective inheritance of the whole nation. Some myths there have been which for some special value of their own have been detached from the original complex and have entered into the common inheritance, while others have fallen into oblivion or have remained in honour only with that group which had created them. In fact to form a genealogical organization of myths erudite mythographers have had to refer to these more or less neglected springs of local tradition. The dominant mythology is therefore an extract of lesser mythologies, and the elements from which it is derived could not but show the independence of their origin.

In the second place these characteristics are derived from the nature of the Greek gods. The Greek god is created

and immortal: but he is not bound like the Egyptian gods to one particular celestial phenomenon or to one special action which constrains him to the same work every day, nor has he become man like the God of Christianity in order to redeem mankind by his actions from birth to death. He has therefore neither in one sense nor another a continuity of action which will fill his whole life. This continuity of action in a periodic work could, at the most, only apply to one or two of the gods, the Sun, the Moon, Hades and Persephone, rulers of Avernus, but the other gods have no means of filling up their immortality with work. And as they are not conceived of as direct protectors of all the actions of living men, like the gods of uncivilized peoples, and as the limits of their protection are vast but uncertain in extent, they have not the means of carrying on daily works either in favour or disfavour of men. As continuity of action was therefore impossible to them, and as they had no direct protective power over the daily actions of men, there was nothing to be done but to fix on some salient fact in connection with each of the gods.

But Greek mythology was not only of the gods but also of the heroes, that is of men who were born and who had died, and might therefore show like Herakles from the cradle to the funeral pile a succession of glorious enterprises. But why, if we except some heroes such as Herakles, Theseus, and Odysseus, who take a higher place, are the others only established in mythological and artistic tradition in connection with one or a very few enterprises? Think of Meleager, Jason, Bellerophon, Perseus, Peleus. Why has the heroic myth been considered by Greek civilization as a sudden drama of thought and action like the crisis in which the moral or material force of a man is manifested for once—and the life of a man cannot be filled with continuous drama. Not even Herakles, Theseus, or Odysseus could pass their whole lives on a battlefield: their actions are detached and inde-

pendent, they are not the consequence one of the other. Their sequence is joined by an artificial connecting link such as a task imposed or the series of adventures of one journey. And even these heroes stop at a certain point and there is peace among the gods or among men. They have surpassed the other heroes in the number, not in the character of their enterprises. Before Æschylus, Sophokles and Euripides gave to Greek civilization tragedy or the delimitation of the moral drama of the individual, mythology and Greek art had posed their material in isolated tragic episodes. The small panels of the chest of Cypselus or of the throne of Amyclæ reveal how, before the existence of literary tragedy, plastic art had formed the nuclei of heroic mythology. Greek heroic mythology lacks figures such as those of the Christian Saints, for whom life was only a succession of good works all tending to the final episode, the conquest through death of eternal happiness. Greek heroic mythology dramatizes and condenses. Christian hagiography writes history and enlarges the subject. And as in the development of the life of the Saints we see the influence and example of the life of Jesus, the limitation and isolation of the myths of the gods must have weighed heavily upon the limitation and isolation of the Greek heroic myths.

A third reason, which may be considered as partly a consequence of the other two, has contributed to fix the characteristics of Greek mythology; this is the absence of true and real bonds of relationship between the gods. They may appear in tradition as husband and wife, parents and children, brothers and sisters, but in substance they are independent of one another. The very fact that their age has been fixed at one determined figure and that except in some few cases where artistic tradition has modified this to some extent this age remains always the same, indicates that true family ties are absent.

Each of the gods came to take his part in the assembly in the aspect and at the age which he has kept ever since.

Mythology may tell us that Zeus was brought up in the cave of Dicte on Mount Ida, and that the Kouretes sought to conceal the cries of the child by noise: but Zeus to the mind and vision of the Greeks is the noble father of the gods with flowing beard. Zeus as a child may be known to erudite art, but he does not correspond to the religious needs of the people. Latona flees from the anger of Hera carrying in her arms her little children Apollo and Artemis, but though plastic art has taken also this episode, the children Apollo and Artemis have no life in mythical and artistic tradition. The beautiful youth and the intrepid maiden are the true Apollo and Artemis. And as the little Zeus grew up and became the dignified bearded god but has never passed this age, so also for Apollo and Artemis is the flight of years arrested at a given time. The myth relates that Dionysos was born of Semele before her time, and was kept by Zeus to the end of the period of gestation and then confided to the care of the Nymphs. In this case, too, art has represented Dionysos as a child, but the Dionysos who is protector of life and the popular god is the solemn and bearded god or the young man in the flower of youth. Art has wavered between one age and the other, and has wavered in different periods of its course, but the god has stopped at a fixed stage of his life. Thus, too, Hermes from his cradle gave proof of his sly dexterity by stealing the oxen of Admetus and the bow and arrows of Apollo, but in art he is from the first the bearded man and afterwards the agile youth.

All these episodes of the birth and infancy of the gods of Olympus are a secondary trait; the course of their life is not completed, or at least it only becomes complete up to a certain point. The Greeks have no god like the Egyptian Ra, who is born as a babe every morning, who lives as a man and sets in the evening as a failing old man. They cannot give to the infancy of the gods the importance which Christianity has given to the childhood of Jesus, for it is a

secondary episode for these gods, it is the passage to the stage at which they will be fixed for ever. In Christianity on the other hand it is the first necessary act of the earthly life of the god for the redemption of man.

It will be understood therefore that in the Greek mythology other gods have had no need to pass through this stage of infancy, but were born with the appearance which was to be their permanent one, as Athene sprang ready armed from the head of Zeus and Aphrodite rose from the waves of the sea as a woman in the flower of youth. And the reason why myth could say nothing definite as to the birth of other gods beyond the indication of their descent is clear. When Hera, Poseidon, Hades, and Ares appear in myth and are represented in art, it is as the dignified matron, the seaman with experience of storms, the man of gloomy aspect and the indomitable warrior.

An Olympus composed of gods who were all of a certain fixed age and appearance could only record actions in keeping with this age and appearance. Hence the limitation and isolation of their actions. These actions could not in fact be the consequence of preceding actions and the preface to actions to follow, for that would have implied a passing of time, a change of their age and human aspect. Thus whether Aphrodite betrays Hephaistos with Ares, or loves Adonis or Phaon or Anchises, she is only the beautiful amorous woman and her actions belong to the one sphere. It is the same with Zeus, who, whether he transforms himself into a bull in order to overcome Europa, or into a swan for Leda, or into a shower of gold for Danae, whether he is obtaining the favours of Latona, Semele, Alcmene or Io, exhausts his activity within the limits of similar actions which require a temporary change of appearance but no change of his essential nature.

This reason which has contributed to the limitation and isolation of the myths of the gods helps to a certain extent to explain the limitation and isolation of the myths of the

heroes. The heroes, too, have had a certain fixed appearance and age determined for them by mythical tradition, and the actions which they perform are those in keeping with this age and appearance. Herakles is a bearded man, Theseus is a beardless youth, Odysseus the hardy seaman. Art can up to a certain point follow a general tendency, and make the figure of Herakles younger, but in that case it makes him younger in all his enterprises and cannot spread these enterprises over his life so as to mark the passage from one age to another. Herakles may set about his struggle with the Nemean lion with the aspect of a bearded man, and will reach his apotheosis on Olympus in the same aspect, but if he starts on his enterprise in the aspect of a beardless youth, he will be received among the gods in this same aspect. The deeds of the heroes are therefore concentrated in one fixed age, and these deeds are similar to one another because they are thus restricted, they are the sum of similar unities. Nearly all the enterprises of Herakles and Theseus are fights with monsters or terrible enemies; nearly all the enterprises of Odysseus are adventures of travel, and for this reason they are outlined on the same scheme. Meleager and Bellerophon performed nothing of importance beyond one single fight with one single monster, the Calydonian boar and the Chimæra, but Herakles, Theseus and Odysseus only repeated the same deeds of conquering wild beasts and of adventure. So that where the legend appears to be rich in myth it is in reality poor in scheme.

To the reasons drawn from the nature of the religious conception to explain the limitation and isolation of the Greek myths, we may add others based on the restricted means possessed by plastic art. The chief of these is the inability of art to represent scenes expressing sentiment rather than action, when it is unable to render figures otherwise than by parallel schemes and flat colours. Art was obliged to make a choice of myths and would prefer those of action, possibly

of violent action, and would be obliged to leave to more favourable times those containing a contrast of sentiments.

Subjects of Mythological Art.

I do not profess to give a complete list of the myths treated by the most ancient Greek art, especially as new discoveries may any day cause myths which are now nearly forgotten to seem familiar to us, but the list which I will give in order to show their limitation and their isolation includes all the most important work of the earliest Greek mythological sculpture.

We will begin with the gods in company. Except full assemblies or groups of gods generally to be present at some event such as the entrance of Herakles into Olympus or some episode of the Trojan War, the only action in which the gods are all included is the war with the Giants who tried to take from them the dominion over the universe. Fragments of this war of the Giants are sometimes found containing a fight between one single god and one single giant.

Passing to the separate gods, when we have recorded the sacred marriage of Zeus with Hera, and the rape of Europa, the conquest of other mortals loved by Zeus, his passion for Ganymede and his fight with Typhoon, when we have mentioned Poseidon's pursuit of Amphitrite and Amymone and the rape of Persephone by Hades, we have enumerated the most salient facts in the lives of the three principal gods. We have no myth in which Hera is made the central figure except in the comic episode of the pursuit of the goddess by Satyrs. The most notable incident of the wanderings of Demeter in search of her daughter Persephone is her gift to Triptolemus of the ears of corn. In the life of Latona the most important episode for art is her flight with the babes Artemis and Apollo in her arms. Besides her birth from the head of Zeus and her flight from Hephaistos with the birth of Erichthonios, the two most important episodes of the life of Athene are her contest with Poseidon for the

dominion of Attica and her meeting with Marsyas when she threw away the double flute which was to cost the Satyr his life. The principal myth of Aphrodite is her birth from the waves of the sea and to this we may add her love for Ares, Adonis, Phaon, and Anchises. For Dionysos the only myths are his premature birth, his nurture by the Nymphs, his struggle with the Tyrrhene pirates, and his wanderings in the midst of a company of Satyrs and Mænads as far as India. Hephaistos, besides being included with Athene in the myth in which the birth of Erichthonios originated, appears when he was made drunk by Dionysos and taken to Olympus to release Hera, who had been bound to the throne which he had sent her as a gift. Apollo shoots at the serpent Python, slays Tityus, who had attempted to outrage his mother Latona, contends with Ida for the possession of Marpessa, punishes with Artemis the pride of Niobe, contends with Marsyas for the supremacy in music, fights with Herakles for the tripod of Delphi. Artemis causes the indiscreet Actæon to be torn by her dogs and secretly loves the beautiful Endymion. Hermes was messenger of the gods and therefore included in many incidents besides the judgment of Paris and the slaying of Argus, but has no special myth of his own if we except the theft of the oxen of Admetus entrusted to the care of Apollo and that of the bow and arrows of his brother who was seeking the herd. Ares the restless god of war is in mythology an inactive person without great deeds or enterprises, for we cannot call his love for Aphrodite recorded in the *Odyssey* or his fight with Diomed described in the *Iliad* great actions. He is only a secondary figure in the myth of Herakles and Kyknos, in which he hastens to defend his son.

If we pass from gods to demigods, Aurora carrying off the beautiful youth Kephalos and Boreas, who carries off the beautiful Oreithyia, are the two principal figures of myth.

Next comes the heroic mythology, which is much more extensive, but even in this the episodes fixed by art are

relatively few. The exploits of Herakles, not only those of canonic tradition, the exploits of Theseus, the wars with the Amazons of both heroes, the battles of the Centaurs, the isolated contests of Meleager, Bellerophon, and Perseus, the principal adventures of the expedition of the Argonauts, not forgetting the myth of Phrixus and Helle, the salient facts of the two assaults on Thebes and the myth of Œdipus, the notable episodes of the Cypric, that is of the first poem of the Trojan Cycle from the marriage of Peleus and the judgment of Paris to the slaying of Troilus, of the *Iliad*, of the *Aithiopis*, of the *Little Iliad*, of the *Ilioupersis*, and of the *Nostoi*, with the subsequent fate of the heroes who returned to their homes and of the *Odyssey*, here we have the mythical patrimony of Greece—the chief fount of inspiration of its plastic art. Vases, utensils, furniture, temples, every superficies which lent itself to decoration and was actually decorated by art drew its subjects from this complex of myth.

Course of Mythological Art.

The fundamental characters which we have recognized in Greek mythology, the limitation and isolation of the myths, have determined the course of art in connection with this mythology. As this art does not possess a numerous collection of subjects which revolve round a single figure, and which would suffice to cover the surface capable of being decorated, similar to a cycle of Biblical scenes or episodes in the life of a Saint which might adorn the whole of a Christian church, different subjects have had to be used together on the same object or on the same monument. This jumble of varied subjects which we know from Pausanias's description of the chest of Cypselus and the throne of Amyclæ is actually to be seen on the François vase. The Calydonian hunt, the dance of Athenian youths and maidens returning from Crete, the battle of the Centaurs, the funeral games in honour of Patroklos, the marriage of Peleus and Thetis, attended by all the gods in a long procession,

FIG. 63.—PERSEUS CARRYING OFF THE GORGON'S HEAD.
Metope of a Temple of Thermos. (National Museum, Athens.)
(*Sotiriadis, "Ant. Denkmäler,"* ii., pl. 51, n. 1.)

FIG. 64.—HERAKLES STRUGGLING WITH TRITON.
From the frieze of the Temple of Assos. (Louvre.)
(*Photo Alinari.*)

FIG. 65.—EUROPA ON THE BULL.
Metope of one of the Temples of Selinus. (Museum, Palermo.)
(*Brunn-Bruckmann*, pl. 288 b.)
[*See page* 207.]

FIG. 66.—THE DIOSCURI AND THE APHAREIDÆ CARRYING OFF THE FLOCKS.

Metope of the Treasury of the Sicyonians. (Museum, Delphi.)

(*Photo Alinari.*)

FIG. 67.—PERSEUS CUTTING OFF THE GORGON'S HEAD.

Metope of Temple C of Selinus. (Museum, Palermo.)

(*Photo Alinari.*)

FIG. 68.—HERAKLES AND THE CERCOPES.

Metope of Temple C of Selinus. (Museum, Palermo.)

(*Photo Alinari.*)

[*See page* 207.]

the slaying of Troilus, the conducting of Hephaistos to Olympus are the subjects which without any close bond of union, and with no chronological succession in the events, decorate the whole superficies of the vase.

We find the same juxtaposition of different subjects in the decoration of temples and other sacred buildings, showing the difficulty experienced by art in delaying long over a single subject. The temple of Thermos has on its metopes, next to a great head of Medusa and to some goddesses on a throne, Perseus carrying off the head of the Gorgon (Fig. 63), and a subject possibly representing the preparations of Chelidon and Aedon for the slaying of Itys. In another small sacred building in the same city the metopes were decorated one with the Chimæra, a second with the Graces and a third with Iris.

The temple of Assos has in the frieze a banquet, a design of animals and Sphinxes, the contest of Herakles with Triton (Fig. 64) and his contest with the Centaurs.

The most archaic temple of Selinus has in one metope Europa on the bull (Fig. 65), in another the contest of Herakles with the Cretan bull, in the third a Sphinx.

The treasury of the Sicyonians at Delphi also shows in one metope Europa upon the bull and in the others the boar of the Calydonian hunt (?), the ram of Phrixus and Helle (?), the Dioscuri and the Aphareidæ carrying off the cattle (Fig. 66), and the Dioscuri near the ship Argo, on which is Orpheus.

The metopes of temple C of Selinus are decorated with scenes of Perseus cutting off the Gorgon's head (Fig. 67), Herakles holding up two little Cercopes (Fig. 68), and a quadriga which has no mythical significance.

The treasury of the Siphnians at Delphi has on its pediment the contest between Herakles and Apollo for the tripod (Fig. 69), on the frieze are scenes from the *Iliad* (Fig. 70), the rape of the Leucippidæ (?), the apotheosis of Herakles (?) and a Gigantomachia (Fig. 71).

On the four remaining metopes of the Heraion at Selinus

are first the sacred marriage of Zeus and Hera (Fig. 72), secondly, a fight between Athena and a Giant (Fig. 73), thirdly, Artemis and Actæon (Fig. 74), fourthly, the contest between Herakles and the Amazon (Fig. 75).

Scenes similar to these are found wherever sacred buildings still remain: a Centauromachia in the archaic temple at Ephesus, the contests of Herakles with the Hydra and against Triton on two small pediments on the Acropolis at Athens, another contest of Herakles with Triton and perhaps the contest of Zeus with Typhoon on the two pediments of the Hekatompedon upon the Acropolis, Perseus (?) and the Gorgon upon one pediment of a temple at Corfù, Theseus and the Amazon on the pediment at Eretria, a fragment of an Amazonomachia on a pediment at Topolia, the Gigantomachia on the pediment of the treasury of Megara at Olympia, on the metopes of a temple at Selinus, on the west pediment of the temple of Apollo at Delphi, on the Peisistratean pediment of the Hekatompedon upon the Acropolis and on one pediment of the aforesaid temple in Corfù.

The limitation of the subjects therefore and various combinations of them are attested by monuments from all parts of the Greek world. But towards the beginning of the fifth century B.C. a change of decoration arose, a change which quickly gained ground, though some temples such as the Heraion of Selinus kept to the old system. This change occurred both in the choice of subjects and in the treatment of them. Instead of various mythical scenes being placed together, preference was given to groups of scenes with the same hero in various enterprises or in which similar heroes could do the same action at the same time. This style of art is on the way to unity of decoration. No longer is a single labour of Herakles taken to decorate a pediment or metope and a whole Gigantomachia is no longer condensed in small groups within the frame of a pediment, but starting from a unitary tendency, which had already announced its coming in the frieze of the treasury of

FIG. 69.—CONTEST BETWEEN HERAKLES AND APOLLO FOR THE DELPHIC TRIPOD.
From the pediment of the Treasury of the Siphnians. (Museum, Delphi.)
(*Photo Alinari.*)

FIG. 70.—TROJAN FIGHT.
From the frieze of the Treasury of the Siphnians. (Museum, Delphi.)
(*Photo Alinari.*)

FIG. 71.—WAR OF THE GIANTS.
From the frieze of the Treasury of the Siphnians. (Museum, Delphi.)
(*Photo Alinari.*)
[*See page* 207.]

Fig. 72. Sacred Marriage of Hera and Zeus.
Metope of the Heraion at Selinus.
(National Museum, Palermo.)
(*Photo Alinari.*)

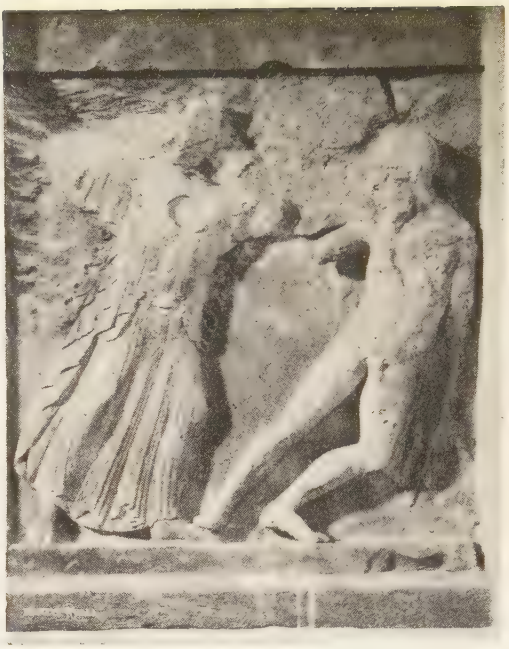

Fig. 73.—Athena fighting with a Giant.
Metope of the Heraion at Selinus
(National Museum, Palermo.)
(*Photo Alinari.*)

Fig. 74.—Artemis and Actæon.
Metope of the Heraion at Selinus.
(National Museum, Palermo.)
(*Photo Alinari.*)

Fig. 75.—Herakles and the Amazon.
Metope of the Heraion at Selinus.
(National Museum, Palermo.)
(*Photo Alinari.*)

[*See page* 208.]

the Siphnians, art decorates a temple or a sacred building with the whole series of the labours of Herakles and of Theseus and with long scenes from the wars of the Giants, of the Centaurs and of the Amazons. The labours of Herakles or the exploits of Theseus form a single series connected with one hero, the contests of the Giants, Centaurs or Amazons contain unity of action.

Thus the treasury of the Athenians at Delphi has on its metopes only the exploits of Herakles (Fig. 76) and of Theseus (Fig. 77). The exploits of Herakles (Fig. 78) and of Theseus (Fig. 79) are represented on the metopes of the so-called Theseion at Athens, while the frieze is decorated with a Centauromachia of later style (Fig. 80). In the temple of Zeus at Olympia we find on the metopes the labours of Herakles (Figs. 81, 82), and on one of the pediments a Centauromachia (Fig. 83). The Gigantomachia, the Centauromachia (Figs. 84, 85) and the Amazonomachia occupied the greater number of the metopes of the Parthenon. An Amazonomachia (Fig. 86) and a Centauromachia (Fig. 87) formed the decoration of the temple of Apollo at Bassæ. An Amazonomachia (Fig. 88) surrounded the temple of Artemis Leukophryene in Magnesia and the base of the great altar of Pergamos was covered by a Gigantomachia (Fig. 89).

From the end of the sixth down to the second century B.C. Greek art, while remaining faithful to the old subjects, was gradually tending towards unity of decoration. Sometimes an attempt was made at connecting this decoration with the divinity to whom the temple was dedicated or with the god who was the protector of the place, but that did not prevent the addition of ancient myths. Though the pediment of the treasury of the Siphnians at Delphi contained the contest of Herakles and Apollo for the tripod, the frieze was decorated with scenes from the *Iliad*, the rape of the Leucippidæ (?), the apotheosis of Herakles (?) and the Gigantomachia.

If the eastern pediment of the temple of Zeus at Olympia represented the preparations for the race of Œnomaos and Pelops, the western pediment was occupied by the Centauromachia and the metopes by the labours of Herakles. If the two pediments of the Parthenon contained the birth of Athene and her contest with Poseidon for the dominion of Attica, the metopes were decorated with the battles of the Giants, of the Amazons and of the Centaurs. And when subjects connected with the divinity of the temple were chosen, they were always mythical, never ritual scenes: art showed its commemorative character and did not attempt to secure by magic the protection of the god for the spectator. This is how historico-mythical scenes also long found a place in the decoration of the temples, possibly a record of the protection afforded in the past by the gods, as in the case of the Theseion, the temple of Athene Nike and the Erectheum.

Frieze of the Parthenon.

There is only one great work of art which in contradistinction to the decoration of all the other Greek temples seems to have a magical rather than a commemorative character, and this is the internal frieze of the Parthenon (Fig. 90). The artist desired to represent the procession of all the Athenian citizens who went to the Acropolis to bring the offering of a peplos to the goddess, and attempted to assure this act of offering for ever by this imperishable form of art. It is a scene of worship in the presence of the gods, whether they are imagined as present in the temple and contemplating from the heights of the Acropolis the procession winding up the declivity, or looking down from the highest peak of Olympus. The artist has introduced into the decoration of the temple a subject which seemed to have been banished by the prevalence of mythological scenes, that is, a cult scene such as were formerly so frequent in Egyptian temples and which would have been equally frequent in the decoration of Roman buildings but

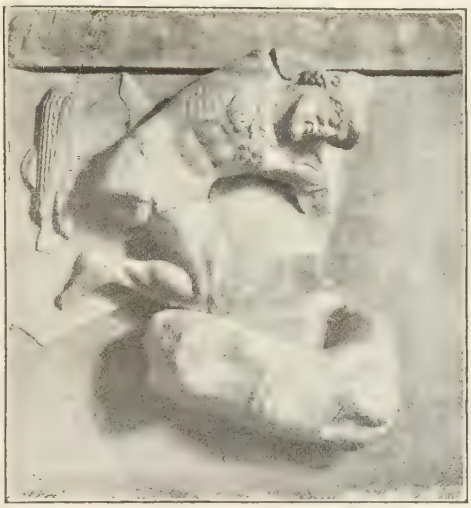

FIG. 76.—HERAKLES AND THE HIND.

Metope of the Treasury of the Athenians.

(Museum, Delphi.)

(*Photo Alinari.*)

FIG. 77.—THESEUS AND THE AMAZON.

Metope of the Treasury of the Athenians.

(Museum, Delphi.)

(*Photo Alinari.*)

FIG. 78.—HERAKLES AND THE LION.

Metope of the Temple known as the Theseion.

(Athens.)

(*Sauer*, pl. 6.)

FIG. 79.—THESEUS AND THE SOW.

Metope of the Temple known as the Theseion.

(Athens.)

(*Brunn-Bruckmann*, pl. 152 a.)

[*See page* 209.]

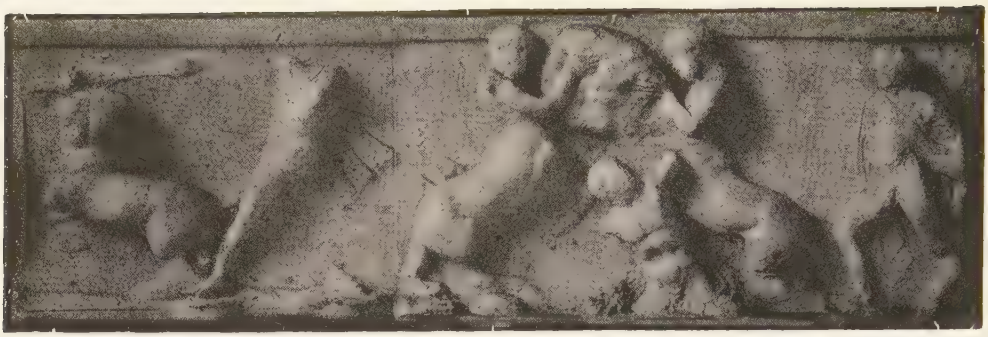

FIG. 80.—CENTAUROMACHIA.

From the frieze of the Temple known as the Theseion.

(Athens.)

(*Brunn-Bruckmann*, pl. 408.)

FIG. 81.—HERAKLES AND THE CRETAN BULL.

Metope of the Temple of Zeus.

(Museum, Olympia.)

(*Photo Alinari.*)

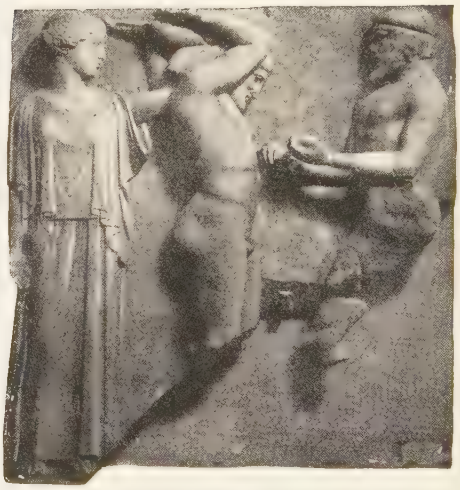

FIG. 82.—HERAKLES AND ATLAS.

Metope of the Temple of Zeus.

(Museum, Olympia.)

(*Photo Alinari.*)

[*See page* 209.]

that the spirit of Greek religion had relegated it among the products of popular art. The audacity of the sculptor consists perhaps in this, that he has broken through the bonds of mythological tradition in descending into the midst of the people to find inspiration for his work.

The frieze of the Panathenaic procession represents therefore a step backwards in the development of religious art. But if the work be more closely examined it will at once be seen in what way it differs from a true cult scene, and in what elements it has felt the influence of the general mythical character of all Greek decorative art. The cult scene is reduced to a minimum, the offering of the peplos occupies a few figures only, and the gods do not even fill the space on the eastern side. All the rest is procession. This distribution of the figures proves that the artist took the cult scene as a pretext and that his chief aim was in the presentment of the Athenian citizens. The magical value which necessarily applies to every cult scene represented by art is reduced to a minimum: even here the chief aim is the scheme of decoration.

In the second place the ideal character given by the artist to all the figures of the procession must be observed. Even by this he has desired to obliterate the magical force of the scene, and has released it from the bonds of time so that the Athenian spectator could see at his pleasure what had happened in the past, what was happening in his own day and what would happen in the future. The characteristic of a true cult scene is the individual element: a certain person makes his offering. What he fulfils with that work cannot be projected into the past. But there is no element of individuality in the Panathenaic procession. It is not the Athenian people who lived in that particular year and who had at their head those particular magistrates who desired to consecrate upon the walls of the temple the offering of the peplos, as Augustus commemorated on the frieze of the Ara Pacis the ceremony of the year 13 B.C., but that the Athenian people immortalized

themselves independently of every individual characteristic, independently of every contingency of time. The idealism of the scene rests in the absence of individualism, but this absence is the reflection of the character of the mythical scenes which formed the usual decoration of the temples.

The Panathenaic frieze therefore, though it represents an exceptional subject, should by reason of its special characteristics be included in the picture of mythological art, and we have to see what influence this preponderance of mythological subjects has had upon the development of form.

Idealism of Form in Mythological Art.

When it is stated that the constant aim of Greek art was the ideal perfection of form, and on the other hand it is said that Greek art began with the same scheme and the same rude forms as Egyptian art, we must ask ourselves why the one advanced so far and the other stopped short. We found the cause of the stopping short of Egyptian art in the nature of its religious inspiration, we shall find the cause of the progress of Greek art also in its religious inspiration.

Greek religious art had in the greater part of its products no such protective scope as Egyptian religious art, but it had a representative scope, it presented scenes that might not be useful but were worthy of being looked at. Hence while in Egyptian art considerations of form were a secondary matter, the essential depending on the magical value of the figure, in Greek art considerations of form were a vital question. A decorative form of art that would have its subjects valued for the appearance they assumed must give the greatest weight to considerations of form, for only by perfection of form could the expressiveness of the scene be increased. This path was therefore inevitably assigned to Greek religious art. If it had had its opportunity of manifestation only in idols and votive images, it would not have pressed on so eagerly in the quest of form as an instrument of expression. This is proved by the

FIG. 83.—CENTAUROMACHIA.

From the western pediment of the Temple of Zeus.

(Museum, Olympia.)

(*Photo Alinari.*)

FIG. 84.—CENTAUR AND LAPITH.

Metope of the Parthenon.

(British Museum.)

(*Photo Mansell.*)

FIG. 85.—CENTAUR AND LAPITH.

Metope of the Parthenon.

(British Museum.)

(*Photo Mansell.*)

[*See page 209.*]

FIG. 86.—AMAZONOMACHIA.

From the frieze of the Temple of Apollo at Bassæ.

(British Museum.)

(*Brunn Bruckmann*, pl. 87.)

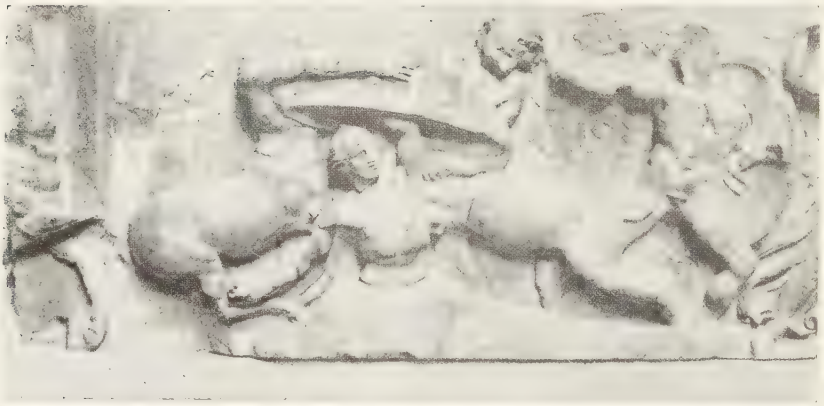

FIG. 87.—CENTAUROMACHIA.

From the frieze of the Temple of Apollo at Bassæ.

(British Museum.)

(*Brunn-Bruckmann*, pl. 90.)

[*See page* 209.]

images, which long preserved their traditional conventions and were only very slowly influenced by the more rapid conquest of form accomplished by decorative mythical art.

We must now consider the direction taken by this care for form in Greek art. It is superfluous to observe that every form of plastic art begins with types, because the type means less expenditure of energy and a rapid reproduction of subjects to which the hand has become so accustomed as to have acquired the power of instinctively quick movement. The art of children, of uncivilized and of civilized races is made up of types. But when the artist desires to modify the traditional type, so as to bring it nearer to nature and to correct it while they are in contact, there are two ways open to him—individualization and idealization. The artist can modify the type to that of a certain individual, or he can modify it by abstracting from the individual, that is by idealizing it. In reality, when the artist idealizes a type he gives it individual characteristics, he determines an individual, but one who does not exist for the external world but lives only in his mind.

In the case of Greek art religion showed the only way to idealization. By reducing the cult scenes to a minimum, that is, those scenes in which men appear as distinct individuals, it had closed one of the principal paths to individualization. Egyptian art, on the other hand, had accentuated its individualization, and in the service of the cult had arrived at the creation of the portrait. In the second place religion, by giving the preponderance to mythical scenes, had raised a barrier between the gods and mankind. The heroes of the myth were placed between. The heroes were not like living men: and still less were the gods like men. Greek art, therefore, had to idealize its figures if it desired to modify their type. And idealistic it remained during its whole course and in all its productions, even when, as in the Hellenistic period, it seems to have gone direct to nature for its individual types.

Even its genre figures are idealizations, one may say that they are ideals of ugliness, but they are not living persons.

This also determines the position of the portrait in Greek art, which differs from its position in Egyptian art. The Greek portrait at the beginning was the grafting of some individual feature upon an idealistic stock, it is an outrage by Greek art upon its fundamental character. Therefore it has always remained essentially idealistic. Only in Hellenism it came near to a greater degree of individualization, which was, however, reached also by another people who had not this idealistic tradition, the Romans.

But the idealization of Greek art is, if one may say so, a humanistic idealization. It never loses its points of contact with the living human figure, as Christian art lost them at one period. Greek art idealized man because gods and heroes must appear in human form, but it has not made its gods and heroes superhuman beings, whose ideal beauty and nobility could not have been found in real life. It has no ideals of celestial beauty like those of a Fra Angelico. For this, after having raised the human form to the highest degree of idealization, that it might be worthy of gods and heroes, brings its gods and heroes down to the human level—humanizes their ideal. The course of Greek art is summed up in these two characteristics, idealization of the human form, humanization of divine beings.

It is a mistake to point out the life and institutions of this people and above all the exercises of the palæstra as the causes which have brought it to so perfect a conception of the human form, these are but secondary causes. In fact, to consider the ideal of the nude among the Greeks as a consequence of their frequenting the palæstra would be to take into consideration only a small part of the phenomenon. Every artistic form is ideal in Greece, the countenance is ideal, the drapery is ideal. The drapery of the female figures on the pediments of the Parthenon is not less ideal than the nude in the Kephissos

FIG. 88.—AMAZONOMACHIA.

From the frieze of the Temple of Artemis Leukophryene in Magnesia.

(Louvre.)

(Photo Alinari.)

FIG. 89.—GIGANTOMACHIA.

From the great altar of Pergamos.

(Berlin.)

[*See page* 209.]

(*Photo Mansell.*)

(*Photo Alinari.*)

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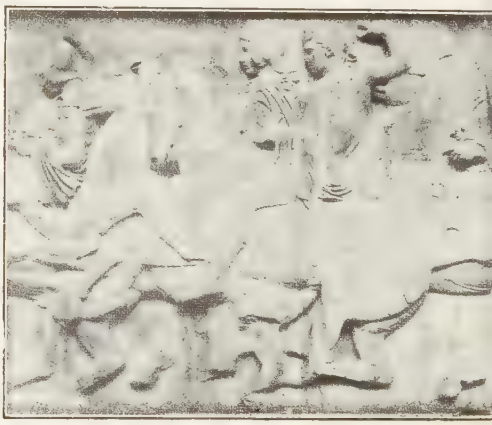

(*Photo Mansell.*)

FIG. 90.—OFFERING OF THE PEPLOS, GODS, AND PROCESSION.

From the pan-Athenaic frieze of the Parthenon. (Museum of the Acropolis, Athens: British Museum.)

[*See page* 210.]

and Dionysos; the chlamys which lies upon the trunk in the Hermes of Praxiteles is not less ideal than the face of the god.

Greek art has, then, been drawn by the nature of the subjects offered by religion to the gradual idealization of form. But this idealization has also been favoured by its concentration round a few motives and a few problems. This concentration is the consequence of the limitation of subjects which we pointed out in mythological art. The repertoire of subjects had been scanty from the beginning and had become still more scanty with time, when those subjects were preferred which had to do with several exploits of one hero, or the simultaneous bringing together of figures similar in kind, as when the exploits of Herakles and Theseus and the wars of the Giants, the Centaurs and the Amazons become the predominant subjects. And what were the consequences of this concentration round a small number of subjects? That art has had to seek in the movements and attitudes of these equal or similar figures that variety which is absent from the subjects. In the representation of Herakles in the twelve labours it was necessary to vary the attitudes of the hero. He could not always be presented in the same position of a person stretching out forward, which in the most archaic art has served for the struggle with the lion as well as for the contests with Triton and with Antæus, nor could he always appear in the attitude of a warrior advancing to the attack, which was adopted in the most ancient art both for the contest with Kyknos as well as for that with Geryon and with the Amazons. For each contest a new design has had to be found, and the attitude of one single individual has been varied as much as possible.

The same thing was necessary in the scenes of fighting between similar persons, the battles of the Giants, of the Centaurs, of the Amazons. In these scenes the same group of a god against a Giant, a Lapith against a Centaur, or a warrior against an Amazon is many times repeated, and the monotony of the scene could only be overcome by variety in

the attitudes. The artist was compelled to make a constant study of types and to make frequent comparisons with the movements of real beings in nature, but the product of all this experience was grafted on the stock of traditional design and acquired an ideal character.

Concentration upon a small number of subjects, besides the nature of these subjects favoured also the process of idealization that was already adopted by Greek religious art on account of its decorative character. To establish artistic ideals it is necessary that form should be considered an important element in art production, so far as this is a means of expression, that is, it is necessary that art should not create a subject that would be useful on account of what it contains, but rather a subject that is attractive in appearance; it must be commemorative, not magical. But it is necessary also that art should have to work on a small number of subjects and that it should be obliged to modify these, but only these. For when art with this same care for form is placed unfettered before free nature, when every artist thinks himself an independent creator, nature will be copied with more or less fidelity but artistic ideals will not arise.

Idealism of Form in the Figures of the Gods.

Religious art of a decorative character has in Greece promoted and favoured the whole process of idealization and gradual approach to nature. It has helped to change the rigid and traditional aspect of the images of the gods.

We have pointed out the diversity of origin and conception between the images and decorative art. Images correspond to the need felt by the people of a protective image—they possess a magical value. Their importance lies not in their form but in their force. This we know also from the greater veneration in which some rude and ancient and often shapeless idol in an ancient Greek sanctuary was frequently held when beside it were images created by art in

perfection of form. If so many "xoana"—idols without form or movement—were still to be seen in late times, this was due to the devotion of the people, who did not in this case confound art and religion.

The image of a Greek divinity would always have remained a rude inert figure, for the protective action of the god was independent of the movement of his image if mythical decorative art had not changed things by its conquests even over the isolated images of the gods. In this decorative art the god was always included in an action even if it were only being present at a meeting. The life with which the image of the god was animated bound it not to the spectator but to another mythical being. Art has then taken from these scenes the god in action and has created as an isolated figure the Zeus the Thunderer, Athene Promachos or Artemis hunting. If these divine beings had been imagined in connection with the spectator and not in connection with any other figure, here understood, but developed directly from the images, they would have faced the spectator in their action and would not have passed before him in profile.

Greek art has made in this way the first step in the representation of the divinity: taking it from the myth it is represented in movement. But the character of the primitive idol is changed, for Zeus the Thunderer and Athene Promachos do not think of protecting the worshipper but only of overcoming their enemy. These images of the divinity no longer possess magical value, or if they have it, it is only by doing violence to their real meaning. They are creatures of myth and exercise no protective power.

That the Greeks themselves perceived that the original character of the idol was violated by its representation in a mythical action may be inferred from the fact that while accepting the details of form and movement of the figures from mythological art they have maintained as far as possible the traditional convention of the images. We have in the

Athene Parthenos of Phidias a typical example. The ancients may have admired its perfection of form and its grand and solemn expression—and possibly admired above all the magnificent technique of the chryselephantine work—but if we may judge by the copies there was as much difference between this image and the garland of sculpture on the Parthenon as there was between the Apollo of Amyclæ and his throne. The rigidity of the image is still there, even under the masterly hand of Phidias, while on the pediments the gods move, stand, and sit in the most natural positions.

Notwithstanding their resistance to the innovations of mythical decorative art, the images of the Greek gods have undergone a slow transformation through the work of this art and have been both idealized and humanized.

For the modification and correction of its forms Greek art has turned to nature in some measure from the beginning. To create forms worthy of the gods it followed a process of natural selection and idealized human nature. This process was completed within two centuries, and if we glance at the figures of the gods at any time during the fifth or fourth centuries B.C. we shall perceive the greater or less degree of this idealization. Thus Greek art has established in the image of Zeus the ideal of the solemn and benevolent "father of gods and men" (Fig. 91), in that of Hera the gentle and dignified matron (Fig. 92), in Athene the austere virgin (Fig. 93), in Artemis the untamed maiden (Fig. 94), in Aphrodite the vigorous woman in the flower of her age (Fig. 95), in Demeter the disconsolate mother (Fig. 96), in Hermes (Fig. 97) and Ares (Fig. 98) healthy and restless youth, in Apollo the enraptured player on the lyre or the bold archer (Fig. 99), in Poseidon the courageous seaman (Fig. 100), in Dionysos the meditative man (Fig. 101), or the drunken youth (Fig. 102), in Hephaistos the good and frank-faced artizan (Fig. 103), in Asklepios the health-giving consoler of men (Fig. 104).

Innumerable artificers have laboured to fix these ideals in

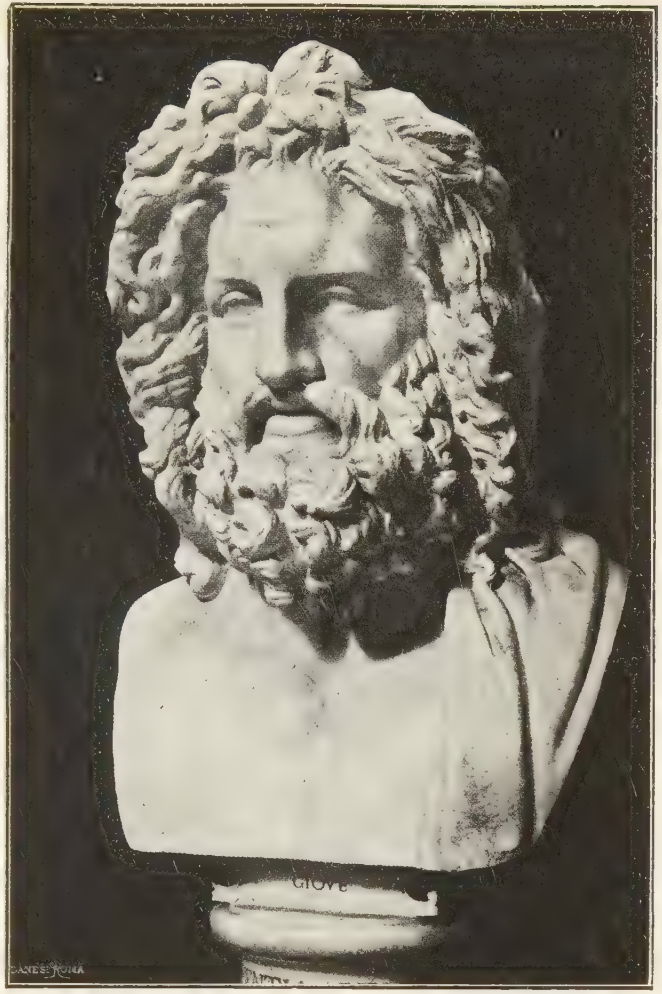

FIG. 91.—ZEUS OF OTRICOLI.

(Vatican.)

(Photo Alinari.)

FIG. 92.—LUDOVISI HERA.

(Museo delle Terme, Rome.)

(Photo Alinari.)

[*See page* 218.]

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FIG. 93.—ATHENA OF VELLETRI.

(Louvre.)

(*Photo Alinari.*)

FIG. 94.—ARTEMIS OF VERSAILLES.

(Louvre.)

(*Photo Alinari.*)

FIG. 95.—CNIDIAN APHRODITE.

(Glyptothek, Munich.)

(*Brunn-Bruckmann*, pl. 372.)

FIG. 96.—DEMETER OF CNIDOS.

(British Museum.)

[*See page* 218.]

marble, bronze, ivory, and gold, and have rendered with greater or less skill the delicate shades of this idealization, but the individual ideal in connection with which their work is developed remains essentially the same.

Nevertheless, by idealizing human nature Greek art has humanized the gods and has been more strongly impelled to copy living nature, and ended by making the gods into men. The bringing together of the figures of one single divinity belonging to various epochs shows clearly this gradual humanization and none of the deities lends herself more easily to this process than Aphrodite, who was the most earthly of the goddesses. From the modest veiled Aphrodite attributed to Alkamenes, from that of Arles to the Cnidian Aphrodite of Praxiteles, thence to the Venus of the Capitol and the crouching Venus of Doidalses we may follow the gradually increasing nudity of the goddess and her slow humanization.

Before this last phase we ask ourselves if it is the image of a divinity or the figure of a mortal woman. With works of this kind the cycle of Greek art in the representation of the gods closes. For a religious art nothing remains after the humanization of the gods but decadence and death. Greek art started from the earth and had elevated the human form to reach the gods on their heights; it descends from those heights to make men of the gods and thus concludes the parabola of its course. It can no longer find new forms for the gods, for it has stifled and suppressed the divine ideal; the vein of its creative power is exhausted. Nothing remains for it but to continue the process of humanization, leaving the gods alone and representing men. At first the human form was used to clothe divinity, but now it serves to cover men. At first, art idealized by making more beautiful, now it idealizes ugliness also. For the first time—unless, indeed, we should recognize a similar stage in Mycenæan art—man becomes in himself the aim of art.

Decadence of Mythological Art.

This is the Hellenistic period. After the third century B.C. we cannot indicate with certainty any figure of a god which represents a new ideal type. Greek art from this point onward, and Roman art also, live on the inheritance of the past, copying and re-adapting with few variations. Religion is neglected as a source of inspiration and art follows the paths of men: genre scenes, ethnical and social types and realistic portraits are the favourite subjects.

And if art still treats mythical scenes it makes of the myth a human drama: the Laocoon and the Marsyas are examples of this. But as the old myths on which art had lived hitherto, being myths of action and not of passion, were not adapted to the new phase of art, subjects were sought in stories from the mythographic collections of the erudite, and also states of mind, violent passions, all the subjects which even when projected into the past represent living humanity with its sorrows and its madness. All the decorative Campana paintings which are reflections of this Hellenistic art, indicate the new tendency. And this art is no longer used in the decoration of friezes and pediments of temples, but forms the ornamentation of dining-rooms and sleeping-rooms, and has broken off all connection with religion.

This was the end of the religious art of Greece. Its decorative possibilities had caused it to be raised to the heights and its very nature was to draw it down to the depths. It had aimed at beauty of form and the form destroyed the content. So profound a detachment between the finality of religion and the finality of art explains why art was not a bulwark of defence for religion, as it had been in Egypt against the invasion of Greek civilization, and it also explains why at this same period the people disdained a religion which had clothed itself in so rich an artistic vestment and ran after Eastern religions which were inferior in ethical content, but in which the protective force of the gods was closely connected with ruder but more beneficent images;

FIG. 97.—HERMES OF PRAXITELES.

(Museum, Olympia.)

(Photo Alinari.)

FIG. 98.—LUDOVISI ARES.

(Museo delle Terme, Rome.)

(Photo Alinari.)

FIG. 99.—APOLLO BELVEDERE.

(Vatican.)

(Photo Alinari.)

FIG. 100.—POSEIDON OF MELOS.

(National Museum, Athens.)

(Photo Alinari.)

[*See page* 218.]

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FIG. 101.—BEARDED DIONYSOS.
From Herculaneum. (National Museum, Naples.)
(*Photo Alinari.*)

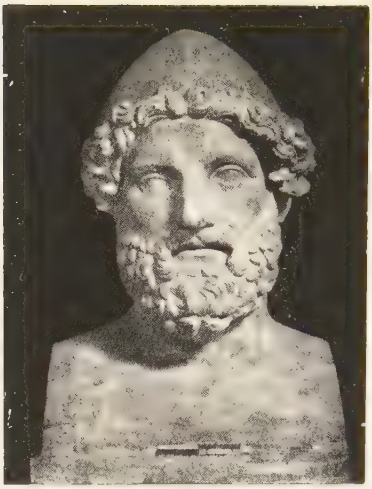

FIG. 103.—CHIARAMONTI HEPHAISTOS.
(Vatican.)
(*Brunn-Bruckmann*, pl. 244.)

FIG. 102.—THE YOUNG DIONYSOS.
(Pal. dei Conservatori, Rome.)
(*Photo Alinari.*)

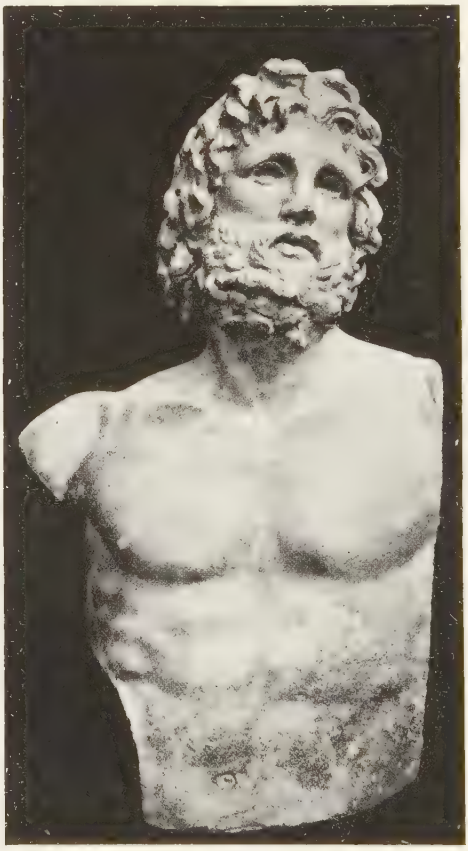

FIG. 104.—ASKLEPIOS OF THE PIRÆUS.
(National Museum, Athens.)
(*Photo Alinari.*)

[*See page* 218.]

finally, it explains why Christianity was able with so little difficulty to conquer a religion which was apparently so strongly supported by art, and how in opposing to it a poorer form of art, but one whose form and content were closely united, it caused this art which had been the greatest and most genial creation of the people to disappear from the face of civilization.

It had no longer any reason for existence from the moment when it was no longer of service to a religion and had become a thing of luxury and ornament. Greek art as a religious art was dead before the Christian religion declared war against it.

Mythological Influence upon the Votive Offering.

But the religious art of Greece was not limited to mythological decorations and images. Above all religion belongs to the people. The people expect protection from the divinity and hope to obtain it by the magical power of the image. The Greeks therefore always continued to offer votive gifts to the gods.

The votive gift might be a figure of the divinity, for the people thought that the god must enjoy seeing his own image multiplied, or it might be the image of the donor, for in that way he placed himself under the direct and constant protection of the god within the very sanctuary; finally, it might be a representation of the god and the donor together in an act of worship. The donor was in this case represented in the act of handing his offering to the god and this perpetuation of the act by means of a figure served to perpetuate the effect. This is the form most interesting to us, for the representation of the god comes under the head of images, while the representation of the dedicator belongs to the category of typical figures or portraits.

A relief dedicated to the Nymphs (Fig. 105) on the Acropolis and one to Asklepios and Hygeia (Fig. 106)

show the conventional forms in general use. On one side the god or gods are the taller, on the other side are the donors of smaller stature. But the important point is that these reliefs while preserving their magical power, which was wholly alien to Greek art, were dedicated not to the great gods but to the popular divinities of health and well-being, to Asklepios and his companions, to Pan and the Nymphs, to the heroized dead and to foreign gods. The cult scene is here in Greek civilization relegated to the lowest stratum of the population as the sediment of an earlier conception, and is limited to those gods who lived in the minds of the populace not for their myths but exclusively for their protective power.

This kind of votive offering remained as a primitive and out-of-date branch of Greek art, as we see if we observe how on the other hand great votive offerings from the State or the princes are as much influenced by myth as any other branch of Greek religious art. The Athenians, for example, dedicated at Delphi a bronze group in commemoration of the victory of Marathon (Paus., X, 10, 1–2). They wished to leave to posterity a record of the present glory besides thanking the gods for the help granted, but all the art of Phidias could only do it by recalling the past. The artist created the group upon a foundation of myth, for beside Apollo, Athene and Miltiades he represented the eponymous heroes of the Athenian *phylai*.

So, too, Attalus I of Pergamos dedicated certain groups upon the Acropolis in remembrance of the victories over the Galati (Paus., I, 25, 2). He desired to send down to posterity the records of the present, but he too felt the weight of the mythical conception of Greek religion. He desired, as it were, to legitimize this representation of the wars of the time, accompanying them by analogous representations of mythical and historical contests: beside the groups of Galati were the groups of the battles of the Giants, of the fighting Amazons,

FIG. 105.—VOTIVE RELIEF DEDICATED TO THE NYMPHS.

(Museum of the Acropolis, Athens.)

(*Photo Alinari.*)

FIG. 106.—VOTIVE RELIEF DEDICATED TO ASKLEPIOS AND HYGEIA.

(Louvre.)

(*Photo Alinari.*)

[*See page* 221.]

To face p. 222.

FIG. 107.—FUNERAL PROCESSION.

Dipylon vase. (National Museum, Athens.)

(*Mon. dell' Ist.*, ix., pl. 39.)

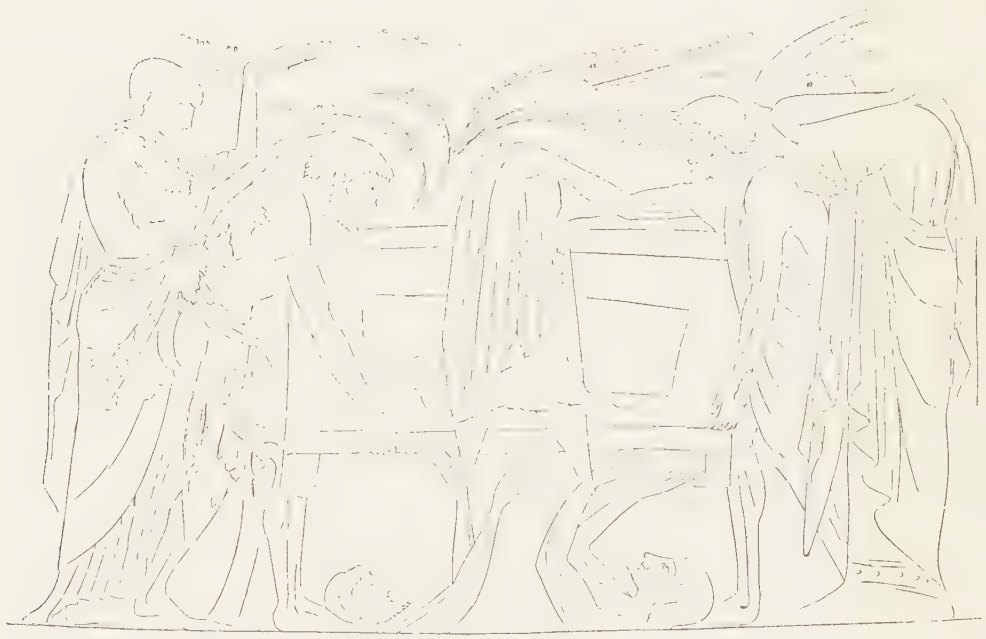

FIG. 108.—DEPOSITION IN THE TOMB.

Vase from Cape Kolias. (National Museum, Athens.)

(*Mon. dell' Ist.*, viii., pl. 4.)

[*See page* 226.]

and of the battle of Marathon. Even the victory of Marathon for the future was invested in the minds of the people with an aureole of myth.

The weight of the mythical conception which is the essential element of Greek religion oppressed even those works which were best to preserve the magical characteristics of present and future destination. This Greek religion lives on the past. In comparing it with Egyptian religion, which lives entirely for the future, we perceive the abyss which separates them, for the one with its constant preoccupation with the help expected from the gods ends by absorbing all the present life of the people, the other, which sees in the gods only the actors in past events, which whether fine or ugly are now irremediable, leaves the field open to the independent and hopeful activity of man.

Elogium of Mythology.

The projection of the activity of the gods into the past means freedom for the spirit of humanity. Man feels that he has to struggle by his own strength only against Nature; he cannot use violence to her by calling in extraneous and superior forces: he submits and obeys, but his submission and obedience are not the blind and hesitating acts of one who thinks that everything can be overturned and altered by the omnipotence of the gods; he is enlightened and sure, like one who knows how little choice of action is conceded even to the gods. This freedom of the spirit which goes with the increase of scientific ideas on the phenomena of the universe, and with the recognition of their persistence and immutability beyond all human influence, is due to the Greeks. It matters little that the lowest strata of the population were still faithfully attached to the idea of the protective action of the gods and continued to ask favours of their images and to bring votive offerings to the temples, to practise magic: the tendency of the religion

could not be disturbed by obscure currents of thought which civilization as a whole had left behind.

The vital part of Greek religion did not consist in its ritual forms but in its mythology. And it is a mistake to regard this mythology as a creation of unrestrained fancy and to attribute to it a poetical and literary value only. Greek mythology asserts the commemorative character of religion and limits the activity of the gods. With mythology the gods become lifeless beings who have been, but who no longer rule the destinies of men. To appreciate fully the significance of this liberation as represented by mythology, one must understand what an oppression and impediment the supposed interposition of the gods and spirits is in every act of the life of uncivilized peoples. We shall then be able to forgive the oppression exercised through a historical Nemesis by mythology upon the literature and rhetoric of all later civilization.

But if mythology be recognized as the fundamental element of Greek religion, it will be understood that this religion satisfied neither the most elevated minds nor those of the lowest classes, as the former were inclining to philosophical speculation and the latter to the mysteries, to Orphism and to foreign cults. To the former the Greek religion gave neither an explanation of the world nor a rule of life, to the latter it gave no promise of future happiness.

These gods of Greece had not created the world nor did they preside permanently over its phenomena: it was therefore necessary to investigate the causes of its existence and of its constitution. The gods had exhausted their activity in fighting and love-making, they set no example to mankind. It was therefore necessary to seek out the principles by which men were to regulate their actions, and so metaphysics and ethics were created by philosophical speculation.

These gods seem to have fixed a limit to their actions in the past and to have concerned themselves only with the

heroes. Humanity therefore, in its diffidence and sadness and in need of comfort and help, sought from other and more benevolent gods, who had suffered on earth like men, that sympathy with their griefs and those compensations to which the high gods of Olympus were strange.

To the more elevated minds mythological religion gave too little, to the lower classes it gave too much of the superfluous. But if philosophical speculation was able to flourish, it was because mythology had freed the spirit of man from all concern for the immanent actions of the gods. And if the mysteries, Orphism and foreign cults could offer consolation and hope to a restless and afflicted people it was owing to the mythological character of Greek religion, which had not imprisoned the people within the barriers of intransigent rites and cults. In the one and the other case Greece owed its liberty of thought and sentiment to the commemorative character assumed with the mythology by her religion.

This commemorative character is recognizable also in the funerary conception from the period of Homeric civilization. The Greeks had not that concern for future life which was so oppressive in Egypt. The dead pass their life in Hades without happiness, and regret their life on earth. Hades itself is mythical, for the figures that appear there are those of the heroes of antiquity. **Funeral Pottery.**

What inspiration could funerary art find here? The future life of the defunct was so vague in outline that it was impossible to represent it in plastic art. There was nothing to be done but to represent the events of the mournful passage from life to death—the dead man on the funeral couch, the funeral procession. These are the subjects which appear on the most ancient funeral monuments of classical Greece, upon the Dipylon vases. On one of them the funeral lamentation is being carried on, upon the other the dead man is being

carried upon the car to the tomb (Fig. 107). We are far from the Mycenæan funeral conception of the sarcophagus from Haghia Triada, in which the dead man is brought from the tomb to receive the offerings. On the sarcophagus of Haghia Triada the magical function of the perpetual renewal of the offerings and sacrifices was attributed to the figures: on the Dipylon vases we find only a record of the sad moment of the separation of the survivors from the defunct. In this department also the function of Greek art was not to obtain but to record: its art is decorative not magical.

And these subjects of the viewing of the corpse and the carrying to the tomb are found in art up to the fourth century. We find the deposition in the tomb in black figured vases (Fig. 108), and we find the viewing of the corpse in red figured vases of severe style and still later on the funerary lecythoi with white ground (Fig. 109). After this, and especially in the Attic vases of the last-named style, the number of subjects increases, but are all connected with the passing to another life and do not deny their commemorative character. There are Hypnos and Thanatos placing the dead body in the tomb (Fig. 110), and Hermes Psychopompos leading him to the kingdom of the dead, Charon approaching with his boat to take him across the fatal ferry (Fig. 111).

It should nevertheless be noted that in addition to these scenes there are others showing some concern for the future, offerings made at the tomb sometimes with a small *eidolon* of the dead man present (Fig. 112) or the defunct himself in person.

In the case of the images and votive offerings the people had preserved a small province where they could satisfy their concern for their future fate on earth; in these scenes with votive offerings they indulged their instinctive longing to provide for their fate beyond the tomb. The motives passed from Attic art to the vase painting of South Italy. But all the scenes take place on earth near the tomb, and death is regarded

FIG. 109.—VIEWING THE CORPSE.

Attic lecythos. (Antiquarium, Berlin.)

(*Winter, "LV. Winckelmannsprogr."*)

FIG. 110.—HYPNOS AND THANATOS PLACING THE DEAD MAN IN THE TOMB.

Attic lecythos from Anvelokepi. (British Museum.)

(*Murray-Smith, "White Vases,"* pl. 11.)

[*See page* 226.]

To face p. 226.

FIG. 111.—HERMES CONDUCTING THE DEAD MAN TO CHARON.

Attic lecythes from Trachones. (Coll. Louriotis.)

(*Pottier*, "*Lécythes*," pl. 3.)

FIG. 112.—OFFERINGS AT THE STELE AND SMALL *EIDOLON* OF THE DEAD.

Attic lecythos from Eretria. (British Museum.)

(*Murray-Smith*, "*White Vases*," pl. 5.)

[*See page* 226.]

as something irreparable. There is no question of a future life for the defunct as an individual; it is a question of the pious duty of the survivors. Only when the dead were exalted to the position of heroes—that is, were regarded as equal to the gods in their protective power and represented equally with the gods within a small temple—the cult scenes which were carried on in their presence acquired in the intention of the donor a magical value. But the cult of the heroic dead leaves the field of funerary art for that of divine art, which we have already considered. The dead man no longer needs the help of the survivors but rather protects them. But in vase-painting the influence of the mythical character of all Greek religion must have made itself felt, and among the funerary vases of South Italy with designs of offerings at the tomb we find vases with representations of Hades (Fig. 113). But this Hades is the mythical Hades of the Homeric conception, populated with heroes; it has no place for the obscure individual for whom the vase was intended. Very different is this from the Egyptian kingdom of the dead, in which the dead man is triumphant in his own individuality.

But while with this exception the humble art of pottery, which was evidently in favour with the people, continued the motives connected with the moment of death or the offerings at the tomb, the more important style of art, that of the funeral stele, advanced a step in the reduction of the future element and represented the defunct in his earthly aspect. From the earliest times statues, either nude or draped in an erect or a sitting posture, were placed on the tombs to represent the dead man. In the presence of these statues, from which any indication of a future life is absent, we can see that the survivors desired to represent the defunct, but not as he would be in the future. They cannot be compared with the statues of the Ka in the Egyptian funerary cult. This lack of preoccupation is still more clearly seen on

Funeral Stelai.

the funerary stelai which represent the defunct in one special action on earth, for unless we see in it a hidden symbolical meaning the action has no connection with a future life. This art immortalizes two sisters in conversation (Fig. 114), the hoplite, a warrior running (Fig. 115), the young discobolus, the woman at work (Fig. 116), the countryman playing with his dog.

The spirit which breathes from these monuments is always regret for life, the regret already so strongly expressed by the Homeric poetry. The dead man shows by his attitude and physiognomy that he grieves for what he is leaving and does not rejoice at what he expects. Plastic art turns to his past life, the goods he is leaving on earth, the particular conditions in which he died. The stele of the coppersmith Sosinous and that of the cobbler Xanthippos refer to the craft of the dead man. Hegeso is looking at her jewels. The reader is immersed in the study of the roll. On the stele of the Ilyssus the youth leaning on a club and accompanied by his dog and his servant shows what was his favourite occupation on earth—hunting. The soldier, who was possibly the prey of the waves, appears in a mournful attitude upon the prow of a vessel (Fig. 117). Dexileos, the knight who lost his life in the battle of Corinth, 394 B.C., is represented at the moment of his heroism: his horse is striking down the already fallen enemy (Fig. 118).

And the farewell scene, the most frequent among the funeral monuments, the solemn leave-taking of the members of the family, in which such calm and resignation are displayed—there is no indication of hopes or fears for a future life, only a sad farewell to the joys of the past. It is a mistake to think that the serene calm of these scenes is derived from the persuasion that the future life will be a continuation of that on earth, that the parting will only be temporary, and that they will soon meet again. The grief with which the husband takes leave of his wife, the parents

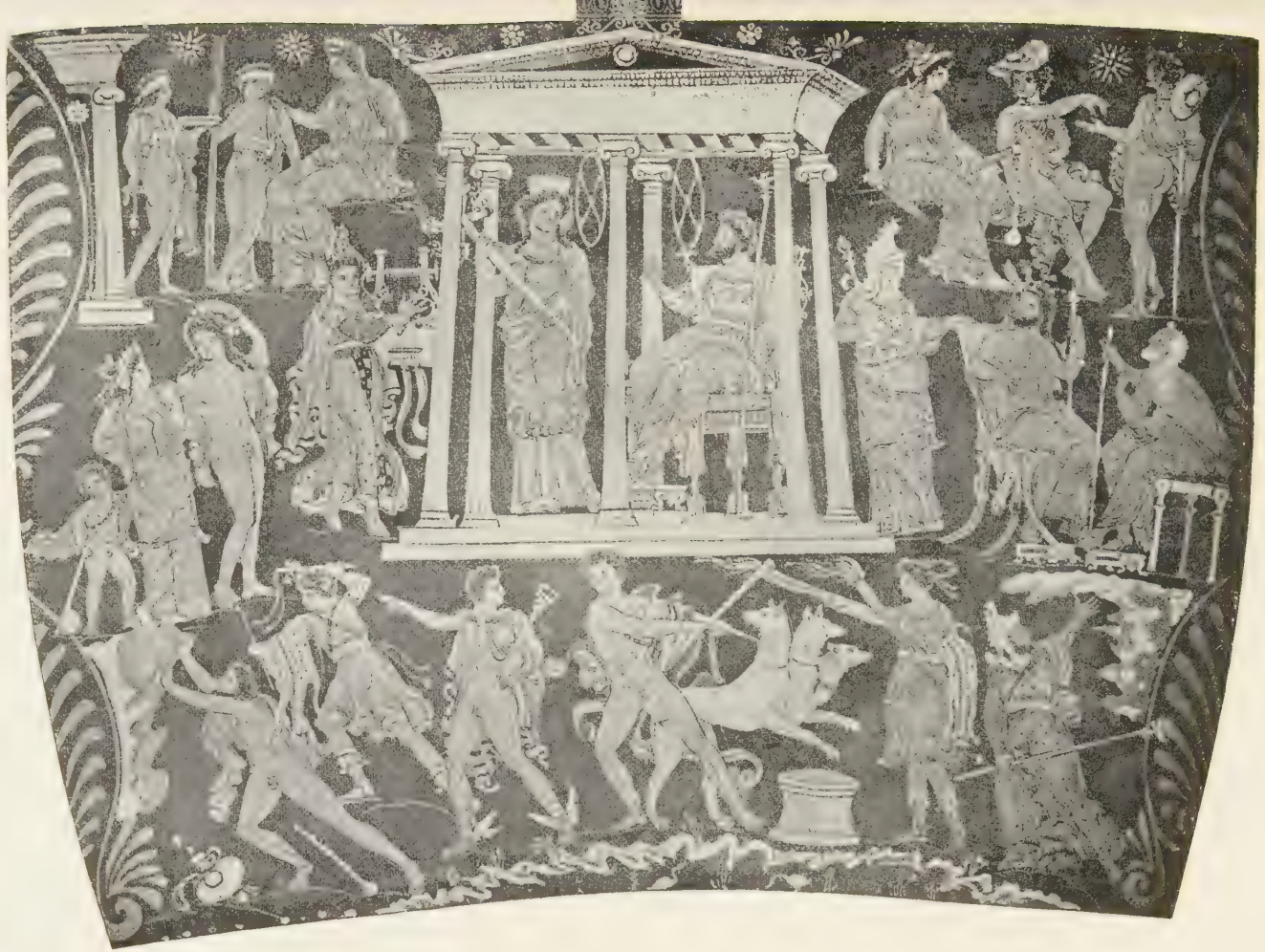

FIG. 113.—HADES WITH MYTHICAL PERSONAGES.
Vase from Canosa. (Munich.)
(*Furtwaengler-Reichhold*, pl. 10.)
[*See page* 227.]

To face p. 228.

FIG. 114.—STEL OF THE TWO SISTERS.

From Pharsalos. (Louvre.)

(*Photo Alinari.*)

FIG. 115.—STELE OF A WARRIOR RUNNING.

(National Museum, Athens.)

(*Photo Alinari.*)

FIG. 116.—STELE OF PHILIS.

From Thasos. (Louvre.)

(*Photo Alinari.*)

[*See page 228.*]

of their children, the sadness with which the old father contemplates his dead son, or that with which the young mother near the last parting takes her little children in her arms, is no sign of hope for a future life but a sign that the parting is final. And if with all this the expression of this grief is so austerely tranquil, it is due to the nature of the funerary conception of the Greeks rather than to their harmonious spirit, which always aimed at an equilibrium either in joy or grief. When a man knows that death is inevitable and that after death the most he can expect is a colourless life in a world of shadows continually pricked by regret for the past, he will look on death without passion and without terror, without those two expressions of fanaticism which more properly belong to the funerary conception of the Egyptians. He concentrates himself in grief; he laments, but not despairingly, for he knows that death cannot be conquered. The resignation of the Greek is a proof of the wider knowledge possessed by this civilization of the immutable laws governing the phenomena of the universe: it is the resignation with which science meets death, not the violence with which ignorance—in imagination only—attempts to force the insurmountable barriers of nature.

It will now be understood why so much space is left to the survivors in Greek funerary art. The egoistic isolation of the dead Egyptian is here absent. The Egyptian has no interest in the survivors except in so far as the fulfilment of all the ritual practices which are to ensure for the defunct the life beyond the tomb: besides, he only thinks of himself. And if there sometimes appears in Egyptian funerary literature some phrase which indicates grief for the parting from his own dear ones, it is smothered by the others in which the defunct is anxiously concerned about his own fate. The dead man is enthroned alone in the midst of a host of servants who work for him, while in Greek funerary art the survivors crowd round the person who is leaving them (Fig. 119) and

the grief of parting is expressed by all. And in the presence of their grief we almost wonder at the calm of the defunct. But even this is a consequence of the funerary conception; when death is irremediable and the life beyond is looked on as a colourless dragging out of existence, the principal grief is of those who remain behind and have no hope of again weaving the thread of life with that of one who has gone for ever. And in its expression of grief this funerary conception once more turns its glance on the past rather than the future, as if to show what has been lost.

This concern for the past life in the great funerary Greek sculpture is such that except in two monuments it avoids the subjects which predominate in funerary painting—the viewing of the body, the deposition in the tomb and the journey to Hades. On a marble lecythos Hermes leads the young Myrrhine from her grieving parents; in a relief Charon is approaching with his boat close to the couch where the dead man and the survivors are feasting. But in the case of the lecythos the very form of the monument might suggest the direct influence of a favourite subject of the lecythoi of painted clay, and in the case of the relief the interpretation of the subject is more than doubtful. In any case two isolated monuments such as these could not disturb the character of this funerary art in marble which after hundreds of reliefs shows that the Greeks saw in death only a farewell to the joys of life.

We do not know what direction would have been taken in Attica by this funerary art which was directed solely to lamentation for life, if the decree of Demetrios Phalereus towards the end of the fourth century B.C. had not put an end to its existence. We may, however, infer it from the fate it had in the other parts of the Greek world, where it kept to the line of the portraits with which it had begun at the time of the earliest monuments. When the secondary figures, those of the survivors, were suppressed, the essential figure was that of the defunct. When the leave-

FIG. 117.—STELE OF DEMOKLEIDES.

(National Museum, Athens.)

(*Photo Alinari.*)

FIG. 118.—STELE OF DEXILEOS.

(Dipylon Cemetery, Athens.)

(*Photo Rotographic.*)

FIG. 119.—STELE OF ONESIMOS, PROTONOE, NIKOSTRATE AND EUKOLINE.

(Dipylon Cemetery, Athens.)

(*Photo Alinari.*)

[*See pages* 228, 229.]

To face p. 230.

FIG. 120.—SIRENS CARRYING AWAY THE *EIDOLA* OF THE DEAD AND OFFERINGS TO THE DEAD.

Frieze of the Harpy Tomb at Xanthos. (British Museum.)

(*Brunn-Bruckmann*, pl. 146, 147.)

[*See page* 232.]

taking was suppressed or the records of the past life, the funeral monument was reduced to the representation of the defunct without any reference to his mortal life. The monument consisted of the portrait alone, and the portrait was in substance an illustrated comment on the inscription. In this way funerary art ceased to be a field for inspiration and ended its course in poverty. And through Hellenistic art its formulas passed on to meet those of the funerary art of Rome.

In conclusion, the funerary art of Greece had begun by representing the deceased alone and with the same representation it comes to an end, but the difference between a stele of the end of the sixth or beginning of the fifth century B.C. and a Hellenistic stele or a Roman monument consists not only in a more perfect arrangement or representation in the space and in a better choice of individual presentment in which a full-face position is substituted for the profile, and the type has given place to the individual, but also in the manner in which the image of the defunct is conceived. In the stelai of the sixth or fifth century the defunct was taken in some action of his earthly life, sometimes with an object or a dog to give characterization—on the Hellenistic or Roman sepulchral stones he is generally represented independently of any contingencies of his life.

The image was made only for the benefit of posterity, and almost indicates a regression towards the magical conception.

Mythology in Funerary Art.

But while this was the end of the funerary art which had developed in connection with the figure of the dead man, another form arose which not only disregarded, as the former had done, the future fate of the defunct, but passed by the dead man to find its subjects in the mythical world of heroes. This art was developed outside of continental Greece, on the coasts of Asia Minor, where the Hellenic and Oriental elements were in contact.

Among these monuments it is difficult to determine the

character of the sarcophagi of Clazomenæ. The scenes with which they are adorned, battle scenes and fighting animals, seem to be merely decorative designs and make no allusion either to the past or future fate of the dead. But on the other hand on one of the most ancient funeral monuments of Lycia, the so-called Harpy Tomb, whose forms are undeniably Greek in character, we find scenes of offering to the dead man or woman seated on a throne, while at the four corners are representations of the Sirens carrying away the *eidola* of the dead (Fig. 120). The proximity of the Sirens to the scenes of offering is due to the contact of two different conceptions. The Siren carrying away the *eidolon* of the dead man marks the moment of passage from earthly life to the after life: the subject is similar to that of the funerary lecythoi of Attica and serves to define the past. On the other hand the scenes showing offerings to the dead are intended to assure the future; they have a magical function, and whether shown in the presence of the heroized dead or in front of the stele are not absent from Attic art, but their juxtaposition on the same monument makes the diversity of conception appear more distinct. In any case we find neither representations of the dead in their past life nor indications of mythical scenes: death is still the chief concern, both as death and for its consequences.

When we come to another great funeral monument of Lycia, the Heroon of Gjölbashi-Trysa, the figure of the dead man disappears almost entirely behind the mythical scenes. Except in certain scenes in which we might perhaps see a record of enterprises accomplished by the ruler during his lifetime and excepting also a scene of feasting and dancing, the whole of the decoration in relief of this monument is from Greek myths. The battles of the Amazons, the battles of the Centaurs, the contests of Theseus, the rape of the Leucippidæ, the taking of Troy, the slaying of the Suitors (Fig. 121) and the Calydonian hunt cover with an extraordinary number of figures the walls of the enclosure within which stood the actual tomb.

FIG. 121.—SLAYING OF THE SUITORS AND CALYDONIAN HUNT.

From the inside frieze of the Heroon of Gjölbashi-Trysa. (Museum Vienna.)

(*Benndorf*, pl. 7.)

FIG. 122.—OFFERINGS.

From a frieze of the Nereid Monument at Xanthos. (British Museum.)

(*Brunn-Bruckmann*, pl. 218.)

[*See pages* 232, 234.]

FIG. 123.—SIEGE OF A CITY.

From a frieze of the Nereid Monument at Xanthos. (British Museum.)

(*Brunn-Bruckmann*, pl. 216.)

FIG. 124.—FIGHT WITH ORIENTALS.

From a frieze of the Nereid Monument at Xanthos. (British Museum.)

(*Brunn-Bruckmann*, pl. 215.)

[*See page* 234.]

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These reliefs are another example of the decorative character of the scenes from Greek myth. As they were used to adorn the temples without having any direct connection with the divinity worshipped within, they could in the same way adorn a sepulchral enclosure when it assumed the grandiose proportions of a temple. There was a want of connection between these enclosing walls and the tomb itself equal to that between the Apollo of Amyclæ and his throne, or between the Athene Parthenos and the decoration of her shield or of the base of the statue. The influence of the grand pictorial art of Polygnotus may be perceived in the reliefs so far as the forms and the arrangement of the scenes are concerned, but the fact that it was thought suitable to adorn a tomb with mythical scenes is a proof that it was chiefly for their decorative character that these scenes were appreciated. And I should not be inclined to see in them any reference to the particular conditions of the life of the prince buried here, for if the contest of Bellerophon with the Chimæra recalls the mythical hero of Lycia, the rest of the myths could only be brought into relation with him by an artificially forced interpretation. But if we cannot attribute a positive value to these scenes so far as regards their relations with the dead man, we find in them a negative value. They have served to exclude from the decoration of the tomb every subject connected with the future fate of the dead man.

From the fact that another sepulchral edifice of Lycia, little later than that of Gjölbashi, the Nereid monument of Xanthos, has no mythical scene among its reliefs we may infer that the decoration of the Heroon of Gjölbashi-Trysa was only a superficial imitation of the decoration of sacred and profane monuments in Greece and did not owe its existence to any change in the funerary conception. It is doubtful whether the winged female statues, the so-called Nereids, which filled the intercolumniation, represented, in imitation of the mythical procession at the funeral of Achilles, the procession which was to accompany the dead man to the distant Isles of the Blessed. The four

friezes in relief on the monument and the pediments were occupied by a feast, a sacrifice, offerings (Fig. 122), a hunt, the assault of a city (Fig. 123), and a contest with Orientals (Fig. 124). The first of these subjects may be intended, like those of the Harpy Tomb, to ensure perpetual homage to the heroized defunct; all the others are connected only with past enterprises of the prince and were in agreement with the Oriental dynastic spirit which would desire to hand down these enterprises to the memory of posterity, but they were also in accordance with the Greek spirit which could show a man no greater honour at his death than by keeping his memory alive.

It is more difficult to see the meaning of the decoration of the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus, the sepulchral monument raised to Mausolus, the Satrap of Caria, by his sister and wife Artemisia after his death, 353 B.C. As the monument was to be both commemorative and sepulchral, the presence of the statues of the prince and his wife may indicate as much the desire to leave their own image to posterity that they might be remembered with honour, as the idea that they could not be better represented after death than in the aspect they bore in life. The statues of Oriental, possibly Persian, horsemen may be connected with some special enterprise of the prince's, so count as a record of his life, or they may belong to some historical event in the more distant past. The frieze bearing the sculptured design of a chariot race possibly perpetuates the memory of the games held in honour of the dead. But there are two subjects which leave no doubt as to their interpretation—the frieze of the Centauromachia and that of the Amazonomachia (Fig. 125). They were there not through any connection with the buried prince but exclusively on account of their decorative quality. The same thing, though in a lesser degree, has happened here that we met with in the Heroon of Gjölbashi-Trysa: the Greek artists called in to decorate the Mausoleum have applied to it the same scenes which had for centuries served for the decoration of the temples.

(*Brunn-Bruckmann*, pl. 99.)

FIG. 125.—AMAZONOMACHIA.

From the Mausoleum. (British Museum.)

(*Brunn-Bruckmann*, pl. 99.)

[*See page* 234.]

FIG. 126.—SARCOPHAGUS OF THE MOURNING WOMEN.

Sidon. (Museum, Constantinople.)

(*Hamdy Bey, Th. Reinach*, pl. 9, n. 2.)

FIG. 127.—HUNTING AND BATTLE SCENES.

Sarcophagus of Alexander. Sidon. (Museum, Constantinople.)

(*Hamdy Bey, Th. Reinach*, pl. 27.)

[*See pages* 235, 236.]

If we look on this funerary art of Asia Minor as a whole, we find that the subject of offerings to the heroized dead which formed the principal part of the decoration of the Harpy Monument and in a lesser degree that of the Nereid Monument, seem to be entirely absent from the Heroon of Gjölbashi and the Mausoleum. But the scenes relating to the past life of the defunct and the mythical scenes have in a greater or less degree invaded the whole of the space intended for decoration. Concern for the future, for that which was to come after death, has been banished from this school of art as well as from the funerary art of the continent. The introduction of scenes recalling the earthly life of the dead man is partly due to the desire to perpetuate his memory among posterity, that is, to a concern for the future, but is partly due to the necessity then felt by artists to turn to the past when they were precluded from representing the future. The mythical scenes introduced—scenes dominated only by the past, had their reason for existence in the resemblance of these funerary monuments in size and sometimes in form to the sacred edifices dedicated to a divinity, so that the use of the same decoration appeared legitimate.

These contrasting principles which followed each other in point of time are found existing simultaneously in a group of funerary monuments of various epochs, sculptured perhaps under the influence of Attic art but destined for purchasers of the Greco-Oriental world—the sarcophagi discovered near Sidon.

The sarcophagus of the Satrap bears scenes relating to the life of an Oriental—a departure, a hunt, a banquet.

The sarcophagus of Lycian form has on the ends Centaurs, Sphinxes and Griffins and on the longer sides lion and boar hunts.

The sarcophagus of the Mourning Women, with sculptured figures between the columns (Fig. 126) and in the pediments, perpetuates the grief caused by death. On the attic is a funeral procession, but on the small frieze are hunting scenes. As these relate to the past the figures of the intercolumniation indicate

by their sadness that death is irreparable, and that in this world there can be nothing but lamentation for life.

The sarcophagus so-called of Alexander shows in the subjects of its decoration a phenomenon parallel to that of the introduction of mythical scenes into the great funeral monuments. The battle scene and the hunting scene (Fig. 127) have the figure of Alexander as the hero. Now if this monument had been intended for the Macedonian prince we should see in the subjects of the decoration some attempt at recording his enterprises on earth. But as this sarcophagus was intended for another these scenes in glorification of Alexander assume the value of mythical scenes. Assuming that one of the companions of Alexander had been or was to be buried in it and that he was represented under the figure of one of the fighters or hunters, this connecting himself with the enterprises of another, this hiding as a secondary figure behind a principal figure, proves that he for whom the monument was intended was far from concerning himself about a future life, but considered his past life as a reflection of the brightness which irradiated from another person and renounced his own individuality. And this renunciation would be all the greater if instead of being the companion of the prince it was some other individual; there would then remain in the decoration nothing but the heroic character, the aureole of myth of the deeds performed by Alexander.

It was only a short step from the decoration of a sarcophagus with the deeds of a lately dead hero to the decoration with the deeds of a hero of myth, and this step which marked the complete sinking of the funeral conception in the past through which it was reunited to the conception of the gods was actually made by Greek art. If the greater number of the Etruscan cinerary urns and the Roman sarcophagi of which we have still to speak are decorated with mythological scenes, this is owing to the impulse given by Greek funeral art and its gradual moving on to the commemoration of the past.

Greece

Architecture among the Greeks was in many respects no less influenced by the religious conception than under other civilizations. Above all we would assert its independence, as well as that of plastic art, from the Mycenæan art and architecture which had preceded it. The Mycenæan religious structures are seen no longer, for neither the great tripartite altar nor the cupola tomb has left descendants in Greek architecture. The palaces of the princes too have disappeared without leaving a trace. For however the erudition of archæology may try to explain the matter, no comparison is possible between the vast palaces of Crete or the smaller palace of Tiryns and the modest Homeric palaces of Alkinoos, Menelaos, or Odysseus, which were limited to a hall or *megaron* a *thalamos* or sleeping-chamber and some kind of storeroom, sometimes with an upper floor, the whole surrounded by an enclosure, *aule*, with its portico or *aithousa*. One single feature would suffice to mark an essential distinction between the Cretan and Mycenæan palaces with their plentiful supply of sleeping-chambers and the scantily provided Homeric palaces. In Homer there are no rooms for the guests, they sleep in the open air beneath the portico (γ 396 ff., δ 296 ff., ο 5). In the Homeric palace, even when it has, by the multiplication of two single units, the *megaron* and the *aithousa*, become the hyperbolical palace of Priam (Z 242 ff.), we must rather see the poetic amplification of the classical Greek house with its enclosure and its paucity of chambers than the descendant of the palaces of Crete and Mycenæ.

Greek Architecture.

Hypothetical too is the derivation of the Greek temple from the *megaron* of the Mycenæan palace. If our fancy is pleased by the idea that Greek democracy planted its first sanctuary of the gods in the great hall of the ruins of this princely civilization, just as Christianity turned the public buildings of the Roman State into churches, this idea is contradicted by the data of the epic of Homer. Temples are

only mentioned in recent additions (A 39, B 549, E 446, Z 87 ff., H 83, ζ 10), that is to say that for centuries after the destruction of the Cretan and Mycenæan palaces the Greeks had no temples. In fact, like their immediate predecessors, their cult was carried on in sacred enclosures, in the open air, among the trees and near the altars.

The spiritual movement which led the Greeks to create the temple must have had some relation to that which led them to make the images of the gods. Once the idol had arisen a house was built for it, and for this house the Greek, rather than have recourse to any part of the destroyed and possibly buried palaces of Crete and Mycenæ, has taken as his model his own moderate dwelling-place, with a rectangular room and a portico in front. And thus arose the little temple *in antis*. If we remember that this type of house in the basin of the Ægean was found in the second stratum of Troy, we may say in this connection that the Greek temple goes back to the most ancient Ægean civilization.

For the rest, even if it be thought that Greek architecture like plastic art may have drawn some elements from Mycenæan civilization or even from the Eastern civilizations—and one of these elements is certainly the column with the Doric or Ionic capital—we must at all events attribute to the Greek spirit the marvellous elaboration of these elements. And it is in the temple its greatest work has been produced. It arose from modest beginnings, for the first Greek temples are quite small. If the size is increased, and it is worthy of note that this happened first in the East, on the coast of Asia Minor, it never aims at the gigantic pile of the Egyptian temples. We may say with reason that the spirit of equilibrium which the Greeks brought into every manifestation of their intellectual activity has influenced this limitation of size, but their conception of the divinity has had no small weight. Their gods were men: the house prepared for them was to be superior to the houses of men, but

the degree of protection afforded by the gods was not in direct relation to the size of the temple, as the Egyptians with their presupposition of magic had believed. In fact, this presupposition was so far from the Greek mind that when the two colossal chryselephantine statues of Athene Parthenos and the Olympian Zeus were ordered of Phidias, architecture was not in a position to offer them accommodation in proportion to their size, so that the Olympian Zeus threatened to lift off the roof if he had risen from his throne and Athene Parthenos, with the crest of her helmet nearly touching the ceiling, must have looked like a prisoner in a cage between the two rows of columns.

In the same way the Greek idea of the gods caused the temple to be made as an open building, more important on the outside than inside, with no inner part shut off from the eyes of the profane and intended solely for the initiated. Only in those sacred buildings which were arranged in accordance with the idea of the mysteries were there certain private rooms, such as were the rule in every Egyptian temple. And so the Greek architect, instead of applying his inventive power to the elaboration of the cella, the true habitation of the god, turns it to the two vestibules and to the external colonnade. All the elements of Greek architecture which became later on the imperishable heritage of every system of architecture which came after—pediments, metopes, triglyphs, dentils, and the types of column, base, and capital arose or were gradually perfected in the vestibules and colonnades. Greek religious architecture in substance is nourished by non-religious elements. And when it has attempted even a reconstruction of the cella it only succeeded in doing this by bringing external elements—the colonnades and architraves—into the interior.

But we see the mark of the religious conception most clearly in the decoration of the temple. We have spoken of its subjects and we must now describe its arrangement. Above

all, its decoration is external. It is not made for the divinity, the lord of the place, like the decoration of the Egyptian temples, but it is made for the people who assemble round the temple. A single exception to the rule is found in the temple of Apollo at Bassæ. Further, it is a decoration limited to certain parts of the building. And so, while the Egyptian temple is covered from top to bottom with cult scenes, because the greater the number of these the easier it was to be assured of the protection of the gods, the decoration of the Greek temple was limited to the pediment, the frieze, and the metopes; it was concentrated rather than allowed to inundate the temple. If indeed these limits were sometimes overpassed, as in the temple of Assos, where metopes are superposed upon a frieze, or as in the temples of Ephesus, where the decoration is applied to the columns also, we must recollect that we are in Asia Minor, a region where we have already found so many examples of modification brought in by the Oriental mind.

One problem only had to be solved by Greek architecture for the religious conception—the house of the gods, the temple. There was no question as to the dwelling-place for the dead. Greek ideas of death and the beyond did not demand sepulchral buildings such as those of the Egyptians. The beehive tomb disappeared with Mycenæan civilization, the hypogeum was banished for ever from the horizon of Greece. The dead were buried beneath the earth, but no house was built for them. As the predominant idea with regard to death was regret for the passing of life, the statue or stele of the dead man was sufficient. But this statue or this stele was of no use to him, it was only for the benefit of the survivors. Therefore, instead of being jealously preserved in the closed prison of a tomb, it speaks from its place on the edge of the sacred way to the surviving relatives and the wayfarers and calls them into its circle.

In the case of funeral architecture, too, Asia Minor occupies

a separate place. The Oriental spirit of this region, though Greek artists were employed, was not satisfied with a statue or a stele, but must have a house for the dead. In the Harpy Monument it is a little house, but though it is upon a pilaster, it does not lack an entrance door. If the house of the Heroon of Gjölbashi-Trysa is little larger, the enclosure is of greater extent. And real temples more or less complicated by additions are both the tomb with the Nereid Monument and the Mausoleum. Only as Greek art had no tradition for this kind of edifice, and as it had often made use of mythical subjects in decoration without any connection with the defunct, when a magnificent building had to be designed, the style of architecture was taken from the temples. This has been done in the case of the Nereid Monument and the Mausoleum. But if the ideas and productions of Greece were imposed upon these Oriental peoples the spirit of the local funeral conception was appeased by the arrangement of the decoration. Following the magic rule that quantity and privacy are most pleasing to the dead, the Heroon of Gjölbashi-Trysa has been filled with scenes and the friezes have been multiplied on the Nereid Monument. The decoration has been chiefly applied to the interior of the Heroon of Gjölbashi-Trysa and partly to the interior of the Mausoleum.

As the religious conception of the Greeks gave liberty of thought to the people and launched them on the ways of philosophical speculation and scientific research, it allowed a wider scope to architecture when the tasks set by religion were thus diminished. Oriental systems of architecture, leaving the field of religion, found one opening in the construction of palaces for princes: Greek architecture on the other hand, following non-religious paths but working in the service of the people, produced palæstra and stadium, theatre and hippodrome for the enjoyment of all men. And we are too apt to forget, in our admiration for so many other manifestations of the Greek genius, that the most wholesome and the purest

pleasures of our physical and intellectual life are connected with those architectural productions which the Greeks in their freedom from preoccupation for the gods and the dead created for the happiness of men.

We find among the people of Greece the same relation between art and literature which we found among other nations as a reflection of the religious conception. Greek literature is mythical and historical. It opens with two mythical poems, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*; the epic poetry which later erudition grouped together under the title of Cyclic poetry was mythical poetry. It aimed at taking the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* from their isolation and making of them two links of a long chain, which should reach from the creation of the world to the eve of the historical period. Besides the *Works and Days*, the poetry of Hesiod was essentially mythical. And the whole of Greek tragedy, which may be considered the direct heir of the epic, is full of myth and the tragic poets, equally with the sculptors and painters, never weary of taking up the subjects already treated by others, to give them out again in new forms. If in one case, the *Persians* of Æschylus, Tragedy has deserted the field of myth, she has taken refuge in the field of history. The whole of lyrical poetry is fundamentally mythical. Whatever subject the poet treats, whatever agonistic victory he celebrates, the facts appear to him surrounded by an aureole of myth. Beside the hero of the present whom he is exalting he sees the figures of the heroes of antiquity rise up. And when the spontaneous vein is exhausted whence rose epic tragedy and lyric poetry, the myth is not abandoned; with erudite and philosophic intent it is subjected to revision and arrangement and supplies material for an extensive production of mythography. Upon the base of these studies, and with quite other intent, arise new poems which circle round the same myths. As the sculptor of the temple of Artemis Leukophryene in

Greek Literature.

Magnesia took up again the subject of the Wars of the Amazons which for centuries had adorned the pediments and metopes and friezes of Greek temples, Quintus Smirnæus treated anew in a poem the events at Troy after the death of Hector, which had formed the contents of three poems of the Cycle.

And the heroic myth in Greece has opened the way to true history. Greek history is not an Egyptian chronicle, it is not the record of his enterprises left by a prince that they may be known to posterity, but it is the investigation and reconstruction of the past intended for the pleasure of contemporaries.

Either in the historic past or the mythical past the people always looks back, and that which is not mythical or historical in Greek literature is scientific and philosophical. The intellectual energy consumed by the Egyptian people in going against nature with their magical and medical literature was used by the Greeks in investigating the laws of nature and of the spirit, which they knew that they could not force but must submit to. A people who deluded themselves into thinking they could guide by their own will the phenomena of the universe and who created a fictitious world of their own imagination in which things moved according to their ideas would never be brought to investigate the true laws of these phenomena ; but a people that knows that it can do nothing to prevent what must happen is impelled to search into the necessity of the phenomena and is drawn to scientific research.

Art, literature, philosophy, science, all that we most admire in Greek civilization, all that it has left as the heritage of modern culture, has been favoured and guided by the religious conception. Only by comparing the productions of two races as different as the Egyptian and the Greek can we grasp the value of the religious conception in the development of civilization, or understand how a conception which concerns itself only about the help expected from the gods in every act of

life, and hence as to its future fate in life or death, can paralyse the intellectual forces of a whole nation in a vain attempt at a material defence of its own existence, or on the other hand how a religious conception which projects both the gods and the dead into the past and leaves the way of the present open to the free investigation of the intelligence should have been able to bestow on mankind for the future the fairest creations which could gladden their existence. It is the triumph of historical and scientific ideas over the magical conception of life.

VII

ETRURIA

Greek gods and myths in Etruscan art—Funerary art—Characteristics of Etruscan art—The portrait—Decadence of Etruscan art—Etruscan architecture—Etruscan literature.

No satisfactory solution has yet been found of the problem of the origin and nature of Etruscan civilization. But though the statement of Herodotus (I, 94) that the Etruscans came from Lydia is not accepted by every one, and though some even deny that the Etruscans should be distinguished as a people of different origin from the other Italic races, the distinct and unique character of Etruscan religion is generally admitted. Whether or no this characteristic is held to be a proof of the isolation and unity of this people in the midst of Italic civilization, and whether or no we see in some elements of this religion traces of an Eastern origin, Etruscan religion called in the help of art, and in this relation we will study the subject.

Greek Gods and Myths in Etruscan Art.

We must first say that we know little of the gods of the Etruscans and absolutely nothing of their mythology. From the inscriptions in connection with works of art and from literature we gather their names and learn which of them have been identified with figures of Greek gods, but we have no knowledge of their nature. The myths in which these figures of Greek gods with Etruscan names appear are genuine Greek myths, and if in certain cases either variations or special features

seem to indicate an Etruscan character, we must not ignore the fact that they may be owing either to special Greek sources unknown to us or to more or less unconscious alteration by the artists.

This agrees with what is known as to the importance of ritual in the Etruscan religion and, above all, of that special manifestation of it, divination, the inquiry as to the will of the gods shown in material signs. The Etruscan religion took great pains to ensure divine protection by means of religious rites, and was still at that stage in which the gods are chiefly considered with regard to the present or future action which they can perform and not for the myths in which they have been involved in the past. We may also add that the Etruscan religion created no images on its own account, and that Etruscan religious art only owes its existence to the inspiration of Greek art.

This absence of indigenous representation of the gods and of local mythology explains why Etruria so freely admitted Greek myth. The terra-cotta decorations of the temples, walls of tombs, superficies of the sarcophagi and cinerary urns, the ornaments of utensils and engravings of the mirrors are crowded with Greek myths, so much so that Etruria might reasonably be considered as a province on the borders of Greek art. And the decorative character of mythological Greek art is accentuated here, where it is no longer bound to the conception of the nature of the gods by the slender thread of their common origin. The Etruscan loved an orgy of colour and form, he cared little what was contained in the scene. If there was in most cases little connection between the figure decoration of a Greek temple and the divinity to whose cult it was destined, the bonds were still more relaxed in an Etruscan temple. The Satyrs and Mænads who formed a favourite decoration of the antefixes (Fig. 128), the horsemen and warriors (Fig. 129) which adorned the acroterion or the ascending lines of the pediment, were there not to remind

(Photo Anderson.)

(Photo Anderson.)

(Photo Anderson.)

(Photo Anderson.)

(Photo Faraglia.)

(Photo Faraglia.)

FIG. 128.—HEADS OF SATYRS AND MÆNADS.

Antefixes from Temples of Vignale (Falerii Veteres). (Museum of Villa Giulia, Rome.)

[See page 246.]

FIG. 129.—WARRIORS FIGHTING.

Acroterion of the Temple of Mercury at Falerii Veteres.

(Museum of Villa Giulia, Rome.)

(*Photo Brogi.*)

[*See page* 246.]

the worshipper of the character of the god whom he was about to worship in the temple, but to enliven it by the grace of form and vivid colour.

As there was no necessary connection between the deity who was worshipped in the temple and the decoration of the temple, this decorative art of the Greek artists was at the service of different religions and spread into Latium and Campania as well as Etruria. From the sixth century, the date of the earliest examples, this art asserts the decorative character, which differed little from the work of the wall-decorators of the Campanian cities many centuries afterwards.

An art which from its origin was so slightly connected with the buildings—an imported art which had no foundation in the country, either as regards form or subjects—would soon have fallen into decadence if Etruria had not remained in contact with the mother of this art—Greece—and had not followed in the steps of Greek progress in art. But if this progress is evident, for the severely rigid forms of archaic art developed into the movement and violent expression of Hellenism, it was impossible to alter the looseness of the connection between the decoration and the cult to which the temple was destined—this want of connection was the original sin of Greek art. On the pediments of Telamon and Luni appear the myths of Amphiaraos and of the Niobids, but the decorative character of these works will always be evident.

The ornamentation of Etruscan temples was therefore a decorative cloak which did not touch the nature of the gods worshipped by the people. We have a proof of this in a humble detail which was never absent from an Etruscan temple, or indeed from any temple containing a succouring divinity—the repository for votive offerings. The votive offerings by which the believers asked for the divine protection for themselves or for some part of their persons, the heads, eyes, ears, hands, fingers and feet, all tell plainly that what the worshipper recognized in the god was the capacity to do good, and his

trust in this modest work of art was a magic spell. The love of luxury and outward show might induce in the Etruscans an infatuation for Greek forms, but the people could not do violence to their own feelings: they went direct to the mark and with their rude images asked of the divinity what the glittering external decorations could not ask, deficient as they were in value from a religious point of view.

Hence in this religious art of the Etruscans intended to supply the necessities of life, whether it is the terra-cotta decorations of the temple or the votive offerings, we perceive the difference between the art introduced through pure love of luxury or strong popular feeling. This contrast did not appear in Egyptian art, in which images were an expression of a strong and sincere religious need, it did not appear in Greek art, because artists of the same nationality, versed in the same traditions, created the decorations of the temples and supplied the believers with votive offerings, but this contrast does appear in Etruscan art, where the decoration of the temples was the work of foreign artists or at least of artists who were skilled in foreign methods, and the votive offerings, on the other hand, were the sincere production of local art.

Funerary Art.

Nor can the funeral art of the Etruscans lay claim to originality of form. It is a tributary of Greek art and reflects all its conquests from foreshortening to chiaroscuro, from attitude to composition. But if it is not original in form it is original in the greater part of its subjects, at all events in the early part of its course.

This results from the great importance attributed by the Etruscans to the funerary cult. Though on a more modest scale, their art is comparable to that of the Egyptians.

We cannot say for certain what were their ideas as to a future life, for the funeral monuments of different periods often do not agree, and after accepting the Greek influence at first in the forms, ended by also accepting the Greek conception.

But they certainly believed in a continuation of this earthly life with its needs and its pleasures, and had much recourse to plastic art in order to ensure the satisfaction of their desires by means of magic.

The luxurious funeral furniture found in tombs of the Regolini-Galassi type at Cære throws little light on the question. The predominant form of art is one tending to Eastern types, formed from Egyptian, Assyrian, Mycenæan, and Greek elements. Without attempting to solve the problem of its place of origin, or of whether it was imported into Italy by a nation or by wandering artists, or if some or all of the productions were of local fabrication, this art may be considered, so far as any relation with religion is concerned, as an art without characteristics, an art of purely decorative value. If we find in it figures from the Egyptian, Assyrian, or Greek religion, they are there only as decorative elements, not as having any connection with the funeral cult to which chance had brought them. The absence of connection between the subjects of this form of art and the religious conception of the Etruscan people is proved by the circumstance that the contents of contemporary tombs discovered in the Latin territory had the same style of decoration ; the Barberini tomb, for instance, and the Bernardini tomb at Palestrina. A Latin of Præneste and an Etruscan of Cære would go down to Erebus with the same outfit of images. That is to say, the weapons and utensils must have had the same magic function of helping them in the life to come, but the figures with which these arms and utensils were adorned had a decorative value only. It is the same thing as in the case of the decoration of the temples.

Nor do the canopi and the stelai, the most ancient sepulchral monuments of Etruria, give us any precise information as to their funerary conception. The canopi (Fig. 130), those cinerary urns in humanized form in which the shape of a vase was masked by the addition of a head and arms, with indications of other parts

of the body, that it might have a human appearance, may show a desire on the part of the people to preserve the image of the defunct, but reveal nothing of the fate which was believed to be in store for him.

The same may be said of the archaic funeral stelai on which the deceased is represented with his arms, as on the stele of Fiesole (Fig. 131).

On the other hand, the group of sculpture showing the dead man and his wife reclining on a couch (Fig. 132) gives some idea of the funerary conception. The artist here represents the eternally joyful banquet destined for them in the life beyond the grave. In all the funerary conceptions of the Etruscans, from the sixth to the third and second centuries B.C., from the earliest of these characteristic monuments up to the time when they disappear, one essential element is a representation of the defunct feasting.

Finally we receive much light on the funerary conception from the paintings on the walls of the tombs, the reliefs of the cippi, of the sarcophagi and of the urns. In these we find a gradual change of conception.

The interpretation of all these monuments is, however, not certain and the series of sepulchral paintings opens with an obscure subject. This is the Campana tomb at Veii. Omitting the decorative figures, there remains the picture of the man on horseback, preceded by another man armed with an axe (Fig. 133), a scene which may have some connection with the funerary conception. It might indicate the journey of the defunct to the world beyond, for in the different religions this journey is always imagined as to a distant land, where the dead man arrives, not on foot, but in a boat or car, and the figure in front of the rider might be the guide for this journey. If, therefore, this is not an episode in the past life of the defunct or in his future life, or if it is not a purely decorative scene, the moment of this work of sepulchral art is a moment of the past with relation to a future life ; it is a record, not a promise.

FIG. 130.—CANOPUS.
Museum, Chiusi.)
(Photo Moscioni.)

FIG. 131.—STELE OF LARTHI ANINIES.
Fiesole. (Archæological Museum, Florence.)
(Photo Alinari.)

FIG. 132.—DEAD MAN AND WIFE RECLINING ON THE COUCH.
Sarcophagus from Cære. (Museum of Villa Giulia, Rome.)
(Photo Anderson.) [*See pages* 249, 250, 259.]

To face p. 250.

FIG. 133.—JOURNEY OF THE DEAD MAN TO THE WORLD BEYOND THE TOMB (?).

Campana tomb, Veii.

(*Canina*, pl. 31.)

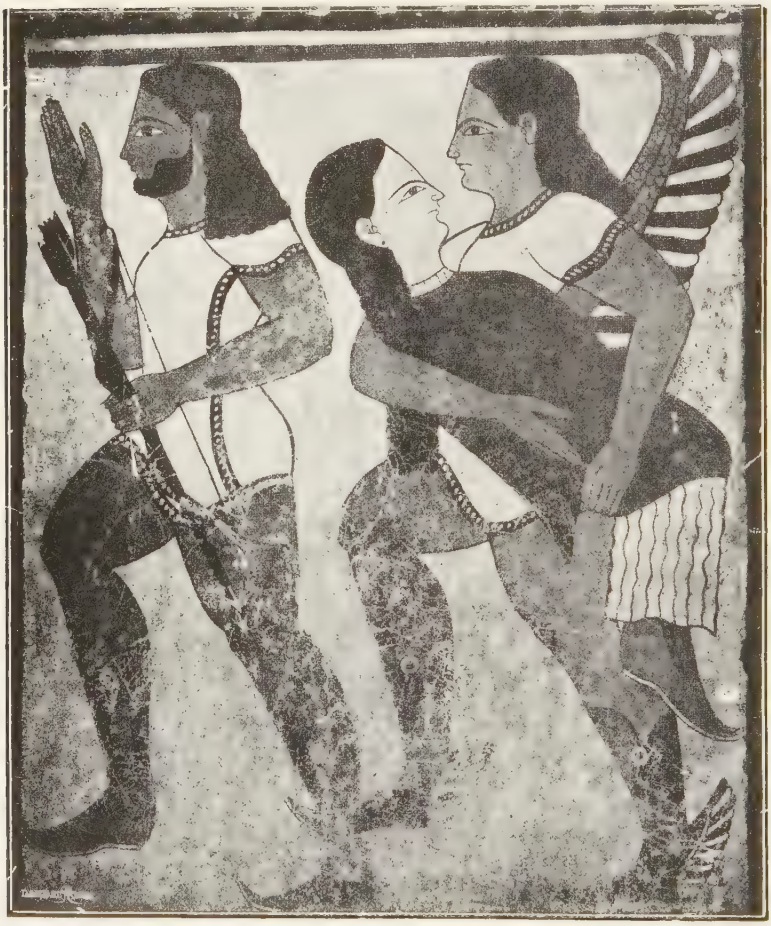

FIG. 134.—DEAD WOMAN CARRIED TO THE WORLD BEYOND THE TOMB.

Painted slab from a tomb at Cære. (Louvre.)

(*Photo Alinari.*)

[*See pages* 250 251.]

A painted slab from a tomb at Cære possibly represents the journey to the land beyond the grave. A winged demon bears a dead woman in his arms, while another in front, armed with bow and arrows, acts as guide (Fig. 134). The Sirens on the Harpy Tomb and Hypnos and Thanatos on the Attic funeral lecythoi present the chief analogies in this subject.

Omitting the scenes of which the interpretation is doubtful, the whole of the most ancient Etruscan funerary paintings of the period, including the sixth and fifth centuries B.C., reveal in the clearest manner the ideas of this people of the life to come. It may be noted especially that, besides the Tomb of the Bulls at Tarquinii, no tomb of Cære, Tarquinii, Orvieto, or Chiusi shows any mythical subject, either Greek or Etruscan. Only in the Tomb of the Bulls there is a representation of Achilles watching in ambush for Troilus (Fig. 135), but in this tomb the presence of obscene images, which are rarely found in funeral decorations, shows that we have here a possibly unique case for which the caprice of the artist or of the person who ordered the tomb may be responsible.

The rest of the scenes which decorate these tombs may be divided into two groups: one, the smaller, treats of the death, the other, the larger group, treats of the joys of the life to come.

To the former group belong the tombs of the Dead Man and of the Funeral Couch at Tarquinii. In the one we have a dead man on his bed, in the other possibly a banquet near the great funeral bier which stands there still. Whether the banquet is supposed to have been held on the occasion of the death or is supposed to have been repeated on some anniversary, the presence in spirit of the dead man is indicated by the bed on which he had slept his last sleep.

The second group includes the occupations and pleasures offered by life on earth, but they are evidently prolonged into the future life. We have possibly an exception in the Tomb of the Painted Vases, for the presence of the two sons at the death

feast might give the idea of a scene referring to the past. Hunting and fishing (Fig. 136), racing, wrestling, perhaps even some performance of the jugglers (Fig. 137), but above all feasting (Fig. 138) and dancing (Fig. 139) constitute the repertory of this funerary art. What has given pleasure in this life will give pleasure in the next also, and the magic function of these paintings is to assure for ever by images that which it would be impossible for the survivors to do in concrete form. The care to provide for the future life is equally in force here as in Egyptian art, while it was foreign to the Greek religion. And though the forms of the objects are Greek, the magical character of the Etruscan funerary paintings shows at what stage the development of this religion was arrested.

Similar subjects, though differently expressed, are those which adorn the cippi, the sarcophagi and the funeral benches of the archaic period (sixth to fifth centuries B.C.). The lying in state of the dead, the lamentations round the bed, the banquet, the dance (Fig. 140), the funeral procession (Fig. 141), music and games are almost the only scenes represented on these monuments. The moment of death and the ceremonies which follow, or the joys of the life to come, are also represented, but there is no reference to the past life of men, heroes, or gods, and the function of art is magical and utilitarian.

But this Etruscan funerary art depended for form on Greek art, and though from the earliest time and through the whole of the period which we have been considering the subjects were in agreement with Etruscan and not Greek ideas of death, the subjects also were finally brought under Greek influence and the Greek funerary conception was accepted. The Etruscans introduced certain details, but though the details were Etruscan the whole was Greek.

Now the Greek funerary conception had undergone the same transformation as the other elements of Greek civiliza-

FIG. 135.—ACHILLES LYING IN WAIT FOR TROILUS.

Tomb of the Bulls, Tarquinii.

(Photo Moscioni.)

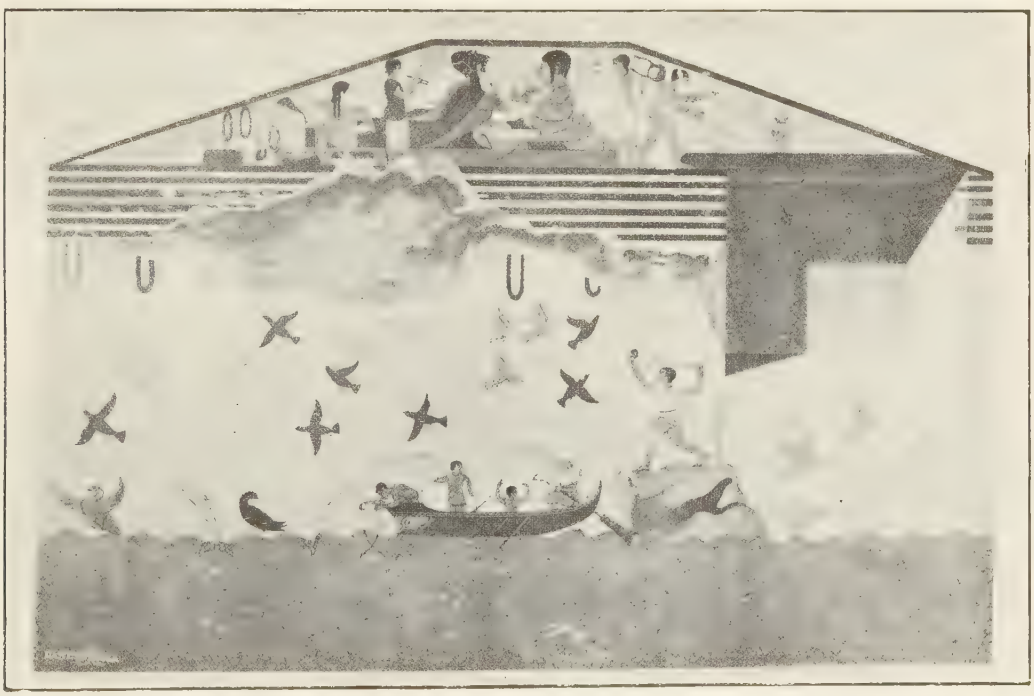

FIG. 136.—HUNTING AND FISHING.

Tomb of Hunting and Fishing, Tarquinii.

(Photo Moscioni, from copy.)

[*See pages* 251, 252]

To face p. 252.

FIG. 137.—WRESTLING AND JUGGLING.
Tomb of the Augurs, Tarquinii.
(*Photo Moscioni, from copy.*)

FIG. 138.—BANQUET.
Tomb of the Triclinium, Tarquinii
(*Photo Moscioni, from copy.*)

FIG. 139.—DANCE.
Tomb of the Triclinium, Tarquinii.
(*Photo Moscioni, from copy.*) [*See page 252.*]

tion and had greatly increased the mythical element. This change is reflected in Etruscan funerary paintings. In Greek vase-paintings, in the midst of scenes representing offerings made at a tomb or at a chapel, there appeared a representation of Hades populated by mythical personages; so in the Etruscan tombs there would be the usual funeral feast, but in the Tomb of the Orcus at Tarquinii this feast is held in Avernus itself in the presence of Hades and Persephone (Fig. 142), of Geryon, Theseus, and Pirithoos (Fig. 143), Memnon, Teiresias—in fact all those personages who gave to the kingdom of the dead the character of a place peopled with departed spirits rather than a place of future punishment. The Etruscan funerary conception has certainly adopted the spirit of the Greek conception very sparingly and has not lost all its concern for the future. The funeral feast shows this, but the removal of the feast to Avernus, which is also seen in the decoration of the Golini tomb at Orvieto, and the presence in the Tomb of the Orcus at Tarquinii of Polyphemus the Cyclops, blinded by Odysseus, indicate the ascendancy of a new element in Etruscan funerary art—the love of scenes from the past, which naturally possess only a decorative character. What was an exception in the archaic period of the Tomb of the Bulls ends by becoming the rule. Thus we explain the François tomb at Vulci, which is decorated with scenes which, unless they have some recondite allegorical significance, have nothing to do with the future of the defunct. The slaughter of the Trojan prisoners in honour of Patroklos, and the episode of Mastarna and Vibenna, two of the scenes in this tomb, represent, one an incident in the past mythology of the Greeks, the other an occurrence in the mythical history of the Etruscans.

But this new funerary conception which arises with the wall-paintings is completed within the circuit of two other types of monument, the sarcophagus and the urn, which close the cycle of Etruscan funerary art. The old type of subject had

too strong a hold in wall-painting to be altogether eliminated, and this is why, even after the appearance of mythical scenes in the tombs referred to, we find in the certainly later tomb of the Shield at Tarquinii the ancient subject of the funeral feast. In the Tomb of the Cardinal at Tarquinii and in a few other tombs we find subjects which seem to be Etruscan in character, such as the procession of the souls of the dead to Hades under the guidance, or the goad, of good or evil demons. But these subjects were scarcely separated from the ancient conception, for they are not an attempt to represent life, but only to fix that past event which preceded the future life—the descent of the soul into Erebus. Similar scenes may be recognized in some funeral stelæ from the necropolis of Bologna. Others, with scenes of wrestling and fighting, seem to recall episodes in the life of the defunct.

Sarcophagi and urns were in the later period chiefly decorated with mythical scenes, so that the funerary art became a decorative art like that of the temples. Scenes belonging to the old funerary conception are not lacking, scenes of leave-taking and departure for Erebus and episodes possibly from the life of the dead man, but besides these we find also the mythical element. And as this inspiration came from Greece, and the Etruscan myths either were non-existent or had not yet found expression in art, they are again Greek myths which supply the subjects. On two painted sarcophagi from Tarquinii we see the battles of the Amazons, and upon the urns we find a great variety of myths. And as this art of urn decoration was developed between the fourth and the second century B.C.—that is, at the time when, under the influence of the new learning, the ancient Greek myths gave place to new and rare myths—the motives which adorn these urns include not only such subjects as the myth of Actæon (Fig. 144) or the adventure of Odysseus and the Sirens (Fig. 145), but all the myths which might be used as a

FIG. 140.—FUNERAL DANCE.
Sepulchral Cippus. (Museum, Chiusi.)
(*Photo Moscioni.*)

FIG. 141.—FUNERAL PROCESSION.
Sepulchral Chest. (Museum, Chiusi.)
(*Photo Moscioni.*) [*See page* 252.]

To face p. 254.

FIG. 142.—GERYON BEFORE HADES AND PERSEPHONE.

Tomb of the Orcus, Tarquinii.

(*Photo Moscioni.*)

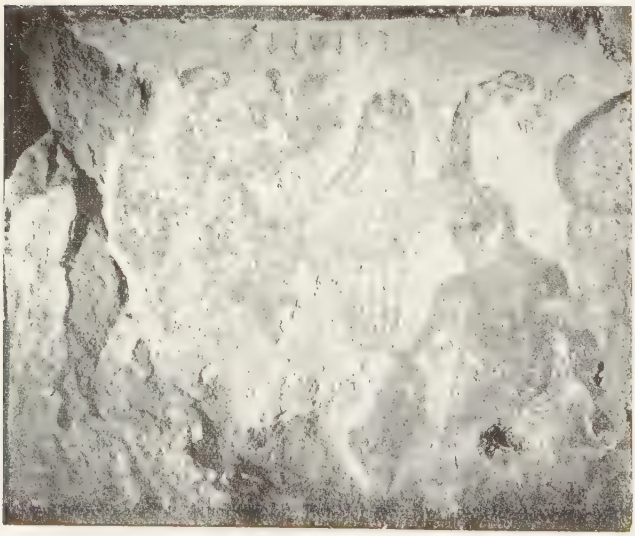

FIG. 143.—THESEUS IN HADES THREATENED BY THE DEMON TUCHULCHA.

Tomb of the Orcus, Tarquinii.

(*Photo Moscioni.*)

[*See page* 253.]

running comment in plastic art upon the various episodes of the epic Cycle. Many of these myths have been adapted to the Etruscan world by the artist, but the Greek character of the subject is predominant.

It may be thought that in some cases the choice of a myth has been made in view of the funerary destination of the monument, and that the episodes of fighting and death have been selected on account of some allegorical connection with the death of the individual, but these myths as a whole reveal their simply decorative function. Besides, they already fulfilled this function in the decoration of the utensils, both the small reliefs applied to tripods in bronze and the engraving of the mirrors.

Greek influence has put away from Etruscan funeral art every connecting link between death and the scene represented: in order to give it richness and variety its reason for existence has been taken from it, and by making it mythical and decorative its value has been destroyed. Nevertheless there has been an attempt in the case of the cinerary urns to preserve the connection with the original religious conception by keeping the figure of the couch with the dead man lying on it upon the cover. This participation in the banquet in the world beyond the grave, which has been a well-known subject in art from the sixth century onward, and which was represented in the tomb of the Volumnii of the third century B.C., is an indication that the people had not altered their ideas of the world beyond the tomb; but the contracted figures upon the cinerary urns were now overshadowed by the rich details of the mythical scene which occupied the front of the urn with its more perfect forms. The necessary and the important was here sacrificed to the useless and the secondary.

Only after fixing the relation between the Etruscan religious conception and the forms of art in which it has been

manifested shall we succeed in seizing the special characteristics of Etruscan art. We can understand why it is not a compact and united mass similar to Egyptian art and does not continue to develop its forms like Greek art.

Characteristics of Etruscan Art.

It is not an art in which the religious conception and forms arose from the soul of a single people. For its form it is always and for the subjects not seldom a tributary of Greek art. If we except the period of Eastern influence for which the critics are not in agreement, and if we except also the canopi of Chiusi, which seem to be an independent local production, Etruscan art is in all other cases indebted for its forms to Greek art. These forms may sometimes have been adapted to the types of the country which imported them, and they may in some cases correspond to the models of special districts of Greece whose original art is unknown to us, but the Greek substratum is everywhere plainly to be seen.

It is an art created by luxury, by commerce and by contact with other races, and has no unity. Each Etruscan centre had its own type of monument and this type was continued for a longer or shorter period. In the district of Chiusi the cippi and sarcophagi decorated with reliefs were the chief production in the archaic period. At Cære the most frequent are the groups in terra-cotta representing the dead man and his wife reclining on a couch. Sarcophagi of nenfro are characteristic of Viterbo and the district of Tarquinii in the fourth to the second century B.C. For the same period cinerary urns are found in a zone extending from Volterra to Chiusi and from Chiusi to Perugia. The use of the stelai of Bologna was limited both as to time and extension. The wall-paintings in the tombs, more widespread than any other of these products of art, are found in the region extending from Veii to Chiusi, but are most plentiful on the coast of the Tyrrhene Sea, possibly from the seventh and probably from the sixth to the fourth or third century B.C.

FIG. 144.—ARTEMIS AND ACTÆON.

Cinerary urn. (Museum, Volterra.)

(*Photo Alinari.*)

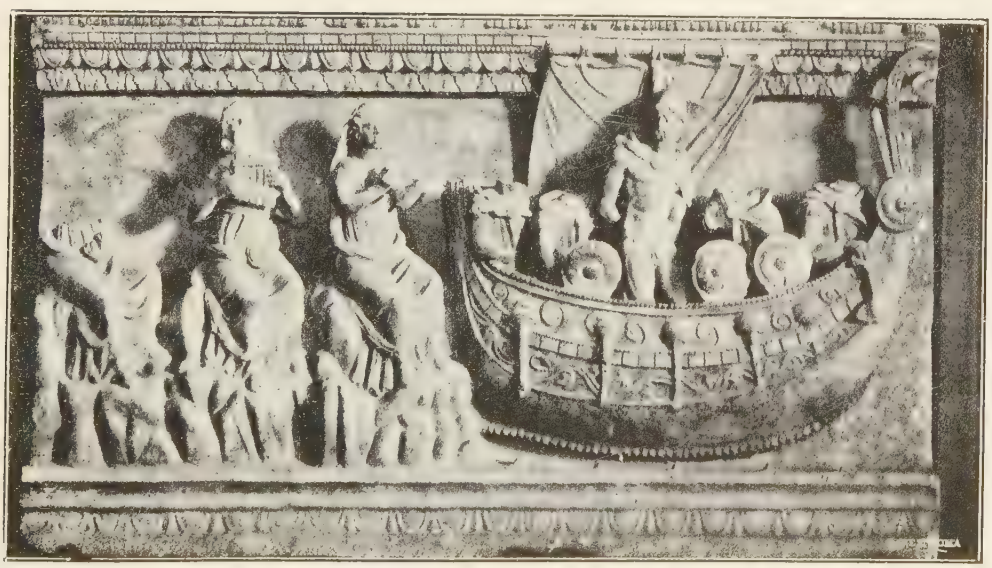

FIG. 145.—ULYSSES AND THE SYRENS.

Cinerary urn. (Museum, Volterra.)

(*Photo Alinari.*)

[*See page* 254.]

To face p. 256.

FIG. 146.—LAR.

(Pal. dei Conservatori, Rome.)

(*Photo Alinari.*)

[*See page* 269.]

The limitation of types to certain fixed regions and certain fixed periods shows that there was no organic development in this art. Greek artists, or those who had studied in the Greek school and had been called to one of these districts to work at some monument of religious art, produced under the special local requirements or limitations one special type. This type persisted in that district as long as the tradition established by the artist remained in force, but as it had no necessary relation to the religious conscience of the people it disappeared as suddenly as it had appeared.

These conditions make it impossible to trace a real history of Etruscan art with regard to the evolution of form, a history of statuary, relief, or painting, without lacunæ or omissions. Separate chapters might be outlined for each special type of monument, but these chapters are only branches of the great trunk of Greek art. Greece, it is true, offers nothing resembling one of the cippi in stink-stone, a sarcophagus of nenfro, an alabaster urn, but the cippus and the sarcophagus and the urn are products of Greek art transplanted to another soil.

And as a history of Etruscan art relating to the uninterrupted development of the forms of statuary, relief, or painting is not possible, neither is it possible to write this history in chronological succession. Etruscan art is full of lacunæ, and it is vain to hope that they may be filled up by future discoveries, for they are not caused by incomplete archæological research but really existed in the tradition of figure representation.

Commerce has not always attracted great numbers of Greek artists to Etruria, and Etruria therefore has not always had a plastic art. It has always had to rely on foreign artists, and when political or economical questions in their own country or in the country to which they had to migrate hindered the exercise of their art, Etruria had to remain without monuments.

For a whole century, from about the middle of the fifth

to the middle of the fourth century B.C., just at the time which marks the apogee of Greek and especially of Attic art, Etruria is without monuments of its own. Abundant though artistic production had been in the archaic period, the whole of the sixth and the first half of the fifth century, it was equally so in the late period, from the second half of the fourth, all the third, and into the second century B.C., while art production was equally scanty in the intermediate period. And besides the funerary wall-paintings which end with the somewhat severe forms of the tomb of the Pulcella at Tarquinii or the tomb of the Colle at Chiusi, to recommence with the free forms of the tomb of the Orcus at Tarquinii, or the Golini tomb at Orvieto, this is proved also by the temple decoration. The terra-cotta sculptures which adorned the Etruscan temples belong chiefly to the archaic or the Hellenistic period, towards the end of the sixth and early part of the fifth century, or to the end of the fourth and the third century B.C. And when, as in the case of the temple known as the temple of Mercury at Falerii, the terra-cotta decorations have been renewed, we observe the leap from the archaic to the Hellenistic period when the renewal was carried out. The scanty importation of objects of Greek art during this intermediate period confirms what we have said.

The Portrait.

This absolute dependence on foreign art and the absence of organic development are seen also in one of the special products of Etruscan art, the originality of which has been unnecessarily exaggerated *—the portrait. Etruscan portraits cannot be compared with the Greek or the Egyptian portraits. Their use was connected with funeral rites, as they were intended to perpetuate the image of the dead man, but the likeness was of less importance than in Egypt, where the faithful and exact likeness of the dead man in the portrait-statue was necessary in

* F. Wickhoff, *Roman Art* (trans. E. Strong), London, 1900, p. 19 f.

order that the Ka might reanimate the corpse. As the Etruscan portrait was also intended for a funerary purpose and not produced with a decorative object, it could not be, like a Greek portrait, a grafting of individual features upon an ideal type.

But what most interfered with the development of the Etruscan portrait was the perpetual dependence of this art upon Greek art. It is an error to suppose that the Etruscan portrait presents a continuous sequence of development from the rude canopi of Chiusi to the naturalistic figures which surmount the cinerary urns of Volterra. The Etruscan portrait has, like all the branches of Etruscan art, reflected every phase of Greek art.

The terra-cotta group from Cære (Fig. 132) is not a portrait but an artistic type probably of Ionic origin. If there were no other indication of this the oblique setting of the eyes, so characteristic of archaic Greek art, would be sufficient.

In the funeral cippi and the wall-paintings of the earliest period we find not portraits but Greek types which, in default of better, may be compared with the figures in the vase-paintings with black figures and the vase-paintings with red figures of severe style.

We find the first real Etruscan portraits in the figures upon the sarcophagi and the cinerary urns from the end of the fourth to the end of the third and second centuries B.C., the period during which the Hellenistic portrait arose in Greece.

The Etruscan portrait is due to Greek teaching. Greek artists taught Etruria that the image of the defunct could be represented with its individual features if the eyes of the artist would look directly on nature without the screen of traditional types. And if the Etruscan portrait, which has none of the refinements of the Greek portrait, appears to surpass it in naturalism—sometimes to an excessive degree—the reason is that in Etruria the tradition of idealistic types weighed less

upon the artist and left him greater freedom in relation to nature. But without the teaching of the Hellenistic school of portraiture Etruria would never have produced a masterpiece like "The Orator." And if Roman portraiture was great, certainly greater than the Etruscan, this is not due to the pretended perfection of the Etruscan portrait, which had long been worn out in the typical professional manner, but is quite as much owing to the energy of Hellenistic art which, by the help of new artistic devices, entered another Italic province and found there a still more favourable soil.

Decadence of Etruscan Art.

These, then, are the relations established between religion and art in the Etruscan civilization. They are certainly not those of Egyptian or of Greek civilization. We found in Egypt that art was closely bound to the religious conception and existed solely for its benefit —an art which never lost its magical character. In Greece we saw that art, though it arose with religion and existed for its service, nevertheless established its decorative and æsthetic character.

In Etruria, on the other hand, we find a constant dualism: the religious conception and the art of independent origin—one local, the other imported. The religious conception is not strong enough to impress a magical character upon this art and arrest its development; art is not strong enough to render this religion commemorative only. This latent want of equilibrium perhaps renders Etruscan art not inferior in interest to Egyptian or Greek art. It gives proof that art can be original and vital only when organically bound to a religious conception. This is why Etruscan art has not been capable of creating an original image of a god, though its pantheon was full of gods which were quite distinct from the Greek gods. The originality of Etruscan art in the creation of its demons has been vaunted, but Charun and Tuchulcha have derived their characteristics from Charon and the Greek Harpies, and are

possibly descended from figures represented in scenes from the Nekyia. And just because it is not necessarily bound to the religious conception this art is equally deficient in originality and vitality and came to an end before the race to whom it belonged, not because religious sentiment was weakened, for we know from history that the fundamental nucleus of the Etruscan religion, divination, still flourished during the Empire, but because the artists who up to then had invested art with her patrimony of form now found other centres for the manifestation of their art.

An idea based rather on sentiment than reason attributes the great Tuscan art of the fourteenth century onward to a revival of the spirit of Etruscan art. If there were no sufficient historical reason to the contrary such as the probably fundamental ethnic change in this region, nor physical reasons such as the fact that Tuscan art flourished not in southern and maritime Etruria, the great centre of Etruscan art, but in northern Etruria, which was in ancient times poor in art, the picture we have traced of Etruscan art would suffice to show that it had no life because it did not arise from the soul of the people but was a foreign importation. Still less could it be supposed that this vitality had revived after so many centuries of silence and death. Luca Signorelli did not draw the demons for the frescoes of Orvieto from the depths of his Etruscan soul.

Etruscan Architecture.

Etruscan civilization too reflects in its architecture the special position taken by the religious conception with regard to Greek art. And in the first place we must, as in other cases, free ourselves from one prejudice, the exaggerated opinion of the originality of the Etruscans in the creation of their temple. The word "templum" doubtless originally indicated the place where astrological observations were taken for purposes of the cult. But that proves at once that it must have been a

sacred enclosure only and not a building. The idea of building a temple must have come to the Etruscans from the Greeks, and we have proof of this in the fact that where remains of the most ancient Etruscan temples have come to light there have been found also figure decorations of equal antiquity.

The question is whether the Greeks gave to the Etruscans the form of the temple as well as the idea of building a house for the god. We should have to reply in the negative if we took into consideration only the description given by Vitruvius of the Etruscan temple (IV, f, 1 ff.): this temple differs from the Greek temple both in plan and elevation, in the proportions and in the decoration. But the evidence of archæology is not in agreement with the description of Vitruvius. The type of Etruscan temple which he gives as an example is indeed the one which had for centuries been gradually developing and fixing its characteristics, the type in fact which was the rule in the last period of Etruscan civilization, but not the original temple. In the cases, unfortunately rare, where we are able to ascertain the plan of the most ancient Etruscan temples we find that quite another type, that of the Greek temple *in antis* is predominant. The modification of this form by the influence of some local building, certainly the dwelling-house, more particularly in the elevation, the spaciousness of the vestibules and the arrangement of the roof, is not only in agreement with the usual fate of a system of architecture transplanted into a foreign country, but is also a proof of the concessions made by Greek art to the Etruscan spirit.

The fact that temples of the same form with similar decoration arose contemporaneously in Latium and Campania confirms the theory that the Etruscans owe the idea of erecting temples to the gods to contact with the Greeks.

And just as I perceive no original imprint of the religion upon the plan and construction of the Etruscan temple, neither

do I see it in the decoration. We have already discussed its subjects, I now speak of its arrangement. The use of terra-cotta facing-slabs in Etruscan temples, the absence of metopes with figure sculpture, the fact that the pediments of the earliest period are open and empty and were only ornamented with figures at a later period, and finally the limitation of the decoration to the frieze, the antefixes, the ends of the central beam, the sloping edges of the pediment, and the acroteria are all explained by the use of wood in the construction of the temple, making it necessary to cover and protect these parts as far as possible. In all this we see the passion for show and luxury of a rich nation rather than a religious disposition.

But if Etruria shows little originality in its temples it does show it in the funeral edifices. In this department Greece could offer no suggestions. The Etruscans introduced the hypogeum into Italy. Not every one had the means of constructing a costly dwelling for the dead, but where the hypogeum exists there is a sure indication of Etruscan civilization. The Etruscans introduced it also into the Oscan country and even left it as a heritage to the Romans. In the subterranean dwelling, hidden from profane eyes, the magic spirit of their religious conception speaks. For this the paintings always adorn the inside of the tombs; they are intended like those of the Egyptians for the exclusive enjoyment of the defunct and not, like the funeral monuments of the Greeks, for the contemplation of the passer-by. For this reason cippi, sarcophagi and decorated urns are not placed outside of the tomb, but are jealously preserved in the interior.

And besides this inclination to privacy the funeral conception of the Etruscans possesses the magical characteristic of imposing size. Though we only know the so-called tomb of Porsenna from the description of Pliny (XXXVI, 19) and should possibly allow for rhetorical exaggeration, we have

the tumuli of Veii, Cære and Vulci as evidence of this love of the grandiose. The mound of earth was to preserve and conceal the tomb as far as possible, but at the same time its imposing size was intended to dominate the plain.

But with the exception of the hypogeum Etruscan architecture created nothing original. Even the strong enclosing walls of the cities were borrowed from another civilization, for we find similar walls in central Italy beyond the confines of Etruria. And thus we find that in architecture as in plastic art this people has made use of the genius of others rather than created original work of its own.

Etruscan Literature.

Etruscan literature draws from the religious conception similar characteristics to those of the art of figure representation. The sense of the future predominates both in the conception of the gods and the funerary conception. If a sense of the past prevailed in art from a certain period and mythical subjects were introduced, this was due to Greek influence. Etruscan religion was possibly too much preoccupied with the protection which it expected from the gods to create a mythology of its own.

The magical character which prevailed in Etruscan art beneath its Greek dress is also peculiar to its literature. The Etruscan language conceals its mysteries from philological research, but whether it is Italic or non-Aryan the character of its literature appears evident. If we except the funerary inscriptions which constitute the bulk of Etruscan literature, the contents which we can perceive in the lead from Magliano, in the liver of Piacenza, in the mummy of Agram, not to mention lesser monuments, is a collection of religious formulæ of magical character. This is confirmed by what we know of the ancient tradition as to the literary productions of the Etruscans. It was mostly at the service of the Haruspices, was magic in scope, and dated back to the sayings of Tages, a fabulous divinity who sprang from the soil of Tarquinii.

And if the sibylline books, as the legend tells us, were of Etruscan origin, we can understand the characteristic essence of this literature.

The Etruscans left neither epic nor history, and as their literature was bound to religion it disappeared together with the latter, and the language also, as it had not been confided to any great literary work, was stifled by the levelling force of Latin.

The Etruscan religion had not been able to give life either to an original form of art or to a narrative literature; always a prisoner within the circle of a magical purpose, it caused this people, once so rich and powerful, to be at last effaced from the picture of Italic civilization.

VIII

ROME

Religious art of Latium—Art of Imperial Rome—The gods and myths of Roman art—Subjects and characteristics of Imperial art—Funerary art—Latin and Roman architecture—Roman literature—Passage from Roman to Christian art.

Religious Art of Latium.

Art drew little inspiration from the Latin religion. Based upon an elementary system of theism, the Latin religion assigned to gods and genii the rule over all that most concerned the well-being of an agricultural and warlike population and the greatest care was devoted to the organization of a cult and ritual which should ensure divine protection to the nation. The element of magic, which was an essential part of this religion, made use of music, dancing and invocation, but not of images.

As in Etruria, there was no indigenous tradition of the representation of the gods, and as in Etruria, when a foreign art—Greek art—was introduced, it constituted a showy, many coloured decorative garment with no necessary relation to the divinity to whom it was dedicated. The garland of figure motives which the Greek artists offered to an Etruscan deity served unaltered for a Latin deity. The decorative subjects of the temples of Lanuvium, Satricum, Velitræ, Præneste or Signia are the same as those of the temples of Cære or Falerii. Satyrs and Mænads, Gorgons, Harpies, fighting Amazons and scenes of genre such as horse or chariot races, and fighting warriors form the usual sequence of subjects.

We only find the head of Juno Sospita with the ox hide as a local type, though even this is treated with Greek forms and perhaps not limited to Latium.

And the Latin gods themselves are represented like the Etruscan gods in the form of Greek gods without any attempt at creating a new image which might correspond more closely with their special nature. Besides, this would have been impossible, for it would have had to be created out of nothing, as the Latins had no very precise idea of the image of a god. Thus art began the work of identification of the Latin and Greek divinities which was completed by literature.

There is one difference between the Latins and Etruscans in this derivation of their religious art from another people, that is that the Latins seem to have lacked that anxious care for the dead which characterized the Etruscans, and there exists therefore no funerary art in Latium. The Latin tombs, however, do not lack a rich supply of artistic objects. The tombs of Præneste contain objects of the same period with Eastern tendencies as the Etruscan Regolini-Galassi tomb at Cære, and of the period from the fourth to the second century B.C., but these objects are the personal clothing and the outfit necessary for the life beyond the grave. They are often overloaded with figures inspired first by the orientalizing art and next by Greek art, but give no special information on the ideas which the Latins had of the underworld and show nothing comparable to the subjects of Etruscan wall-paintings.

Possibly also the passion for art was less strong among the Latins, and if art in Latium had closed its course at the same period at which it came to an end in Etruria, the third and second century B.C., this Latin art would only be a modest episode in the provincial life of Greek art.

But the actual art of Rome has nothing to do with these Latin productions of the archaic period, and of the fourth and

third centuries B.C. Augustan art, with which the history of Roman art begins, is of Greek though different origin. Etruscan art and Latin art before the Augustan age were the production of Greek artists who came into Etruria and Latium to serve small communities. Roman art, on the other hand, was the creation of Greek artists called in to put their work at the service of an empire.

Art of Imperial Rome.

The difference then between Latin art and Roman art does not so much depend on the fact that between the setting of the one and the rise of the other Greece had been conquered by Rome, and that the former with her refined civilization had conquered the rude conqueror; it does not depend on the different position of the Greek artists who had come in preceding centuries to this region for the sake of high pay and now came because they were attracted by the fascination of the capital of the world, but it does consist in the fact that between the one and the other period of art the imperial idea had been constituted.* A true Roman art would never have arisen if Rome had remained a republic. Treasures of art taken from conquered cities would have accumulated within its walls, copies of Greek masterpieces would have been multiplied to satisfy the desires of rich citizens, but Rome would have possessed no Roman art. Rome of the Empire dictated the latest and most exact political formula for the movement of centralization begun by Alexander the Great and continued by the Hellenistic princes, and the effects of this were impressed even upon art. But this political movement which altered the character of the old Greek democracy and brought the chief power into the hands of one man, introduced into the civilization of Europe elements which till that time had been characteristic of Eastern monarchies. Art which would show honour to such a principle would have to put this politically predomi-

* E. Strong, *Roman Sculpture*, London, 1907, p. 29.

FIG. 147.—JUNO OF LANUVIUM.

(Vatican.)

(*Photo Alinari.*)

FIG. 148.—ARTEMIS OF EPHESUS.

(Pal. dei Conservatori, Rome.)

(*Photo Alinari.*)

FIG. 149.—SACRIFICE OF MITHRA.

(Vatican.)

(*Photo Alinari.*)

[*See pages* 269, 271.]

FIG. 150.—ROMULUS AND REMUS FOUND BY THE SHEPHERDS.

Altar from Ostia. (Museo delle Terme, Rome.)

(Photo Alinari.)

[*See page* 271.]

nant figure in the centre of the picture and become an art of the Court.

This art in Egypt and in the Hellenic kingdoms of Greece had counterbalanced the predominant figure of the prince by the figures of the gods and sometimes had made a god of the prince himself, but had not exhausted itself upon his image.

The Gods and Myths of Roman Art.

Conditions were different in Rome, where a tradition of religious figure representation had not been established and the peculiar qualities of Roman art depend on the standing out of the figure of the prince from a background from which this tradition is absent.

Above all it was impossible in Roman art to create the figure of a god. The Latins, who in the preceding centuries had accepted from Greek art the forms for their gods, had not been able to give inspiration for new types to the artists, and the Romans were equally incapable of it.

The type of the Lares (Fig. 146), the characteristic genii of the Roman religion, is a creation of Greek art most strongly influenced by the Hellenistic spirit.

The Juno of Lanuvium (Fig. 147) has the attributes of the Latin goddess, but is a figure of Greek art of the second half of the fifth century B.C.

For the Latin god Semo Sancus, Roman art has adapted a statue of Apollo of the early part of the fifth century B.C.

And with more or less modification of their intrinsic character all the Roman gods found in the patrimony of Greek art a corresponding figure.

The Roman people had no feeling for all this religious art; they only saw its decorative use. Their gods, the real Latin gods, lived in the minds of the people independently of these images. Possibly they had no very clear image in their minds, but they felt that their gods had little connection with these figures bestowed upon them by a foreign art. If Roman art

copied the Greek gods of all periods, from the stiff statues of the archaic period to the soft and delicate figures of the fourth century, it proves that these figures interested them not for the religious conception expressed in them but for the artistic exterior beneath which this conception was smothered. The Romans no longer felt what these figures stood for, but appreciated the outside form only. They had gone a step farther than the Greeks. The Greeks, when they gave beautiful forms to their gods, never forgot that beneath this form was hidden the protective force of a god. The Romans recognized in these gods a form of expression only, and their images which adorned the palaces, gardens and villas had no other value than that of the statues of athletes or genre groups with which they were often interspersed.

A further testimony to the purely decorative value which they united to the whole patrimony of religious ideas brought by the Greeks is seen in the use of mythical scenes for the ornamentation of the walls of a house. The Romans carried to an extreme that process of reducing a myth to its decorative value which was begun by the Greeks in their vase-paintings and continued by the Etruscans and Latins in their tripods, mirrors, cists and furniture of all kinds.

The attitude of the Romans towards the religious aspect of the images provided by Greek art may be regarded as indifferent. They felt neither the passionate attraction of neophytes nor the repugnance of conservative believers. This art received from them neither impulsion nor arrest. And if certain Eastern cults were diffused in the Empire and even menaced the old religion of the State, this is not due to any religious ardour of the Romans, who were sated with their ancient cults, but rather to race immigration on a large scale with the infiltration of Eastern elements into the population of Roman, Latin, Italic, or European origin, a direct consequence of Imperial centralization, which was greatly increased by the military constitution of the Empire. In this respect also we note the indifference of the Roman mind

FIG. 151.—JUDGMENT OF PARIS AND TROJANS FIGHTING.

Casale base. (Vatican.)

(Photo Alinari.)

[*See page* 271.]

To face p. 270.

FIG. 152.—TELLUS AND GENII OF AIR AND WATER.
From the Ara Pacis. (Uffizi, Florence.)
(*Photo Alinari.*)
[*See page* 275.]

FIG. 153.—SACRIFICE.
From the Ara Pacis. (Museo delle Terme, Rome.)
(*Photo Alinari.*) [*See page* 276.]

towards new religions. Images had to be made for the use of the new cults and form was given to these images not by Roman art but by Greek art. The Artemis of Ephesus (Fig. 148) and the sacrifice of Mithra (Fig. 149), amongst others, show by their forms their undoubted Greek origin.

And just as Roman religion was unable to give inspiration to figures of the gods, it was unable to suggest representations of myth. It had no mythology of the gods. This fact helps to prove its primitive magical character, for as protection only was expected of the gods, their past did not signify. They had not even a mythology of the heroes. The fortunes of Rome lived in tradition from the beginning as history, not myth. Rome had had kings, not heroes. Only the birth of the first king and the facts preceding the foundation of the city, such as the augury of Romulus and Remus, were invested with an aureole of myth: indeed, these are the only facts which have suggested a subject to art (Fig. 150). But in this case also the inspiration came from Greece, not Rome, for what Stesichorus had done in literature with his account of the coming of Æneas into Italy after the Trojan War, was done by art when it connected Romulus with the pious Æneas and pious Æneas with the causes of the destruction of Troy. On the Casale base, for example, when the artist goes back to the judgment of Paris (Fig. 151) in order to commemorate the origin of Rome, he proves that the inspiration for this myth in art came from Greece, not Rome. In the same way Mars, Rhea Sylvia, Romulus and Remus were represented on the west front of the temple of Venus and Rome, but on the east front were the figures perhaps of Venus and Anchises.

Upon this foundation of indifference to religion arose the Imperial art of Rome. What subjects could the Imperial idea suggest? As this idea was summed up in the figure of the prince, the prince takes that central place* in Roman art

* E. Strong, *op. cit.*, pp. 166, 341.

which was occupied in Greek art by the gods. The visual angle of the outlook of art is thus completely displaced. Roman art, taking up one of the tasks of Eastern art, the apotheosis of the prince, carries it out in different fashion and faces new problems in the treatment of the scene.

Subjects and Characteristics of Imperial Art.

Above all, it must be noted that this art is not historic art; it does not attempt to commemorate the past but only to send on the present to the future.* It corresponds to the same magical conception of civilization which we met with among the Egyptians and Assyrians. This art found the soil already prepared in Roman civilization, for the Roman captains who had returned from the wars used to exhibit pictures of the chief events of the campaign (Pliny, XXXV, 22 f.). The fragment of painting of M. Fannius and Q. Fabius found on the Esquiline is perhaps evidence of this custom.

But the art which was to show the apotheosis of a prince could not omit the religious element. If the prince had been victorious and the victory had increased the grandeur of the Roman name, it was owing to the protection of the gods. To forget the gods in this glorification would be to encounter their anger. Therefore the religious feature is never omitted in this commemorative art of Rome.

But the Roman spirit did not succeed in creating a religious iconography of its own. How could it pay this tribute to religion in a distinctly Roman work? By the two ways which it took at the same time, by the one representing the sacrifice which appeared necessary for the propitiation of the gods according to the Roman cult which was based upon a magical conception, by the other accepting from Greek art the types fixed by it for the gods and introducing a foreign element into the midst of a distinctly Roman function. A scene of sacrifice and the presence of gods in Greek form are the motives that either together or alone are never absent from any Roman

* E. Strong, *op. cit.*, p. 37 f.

commemorative monument. The sacrificial scene above all is so peculiar a feature that this alone would suffice to constitute the difference between Greek and Roman art and to apportion the different degree of inspiration which came to them from religion.

Why is there so rarely a representation of a sacrificial scene in Greek art and an almost absolute absence of such scenes in monumental art—I can only recollect one on the frieze of the Nereid Monument—and why is there no Roman commemorative monument without this scene?

Because the Greeks were interested in myth the protection which they expected to receive was a secondary matter in comparison with the pleasure they experienced in celebrating the past of the gods and the past of the heroes protected by them. True it is that the scenes of sacrifice and offerings are plentiful, chiefly in modest votive reliefs, in productions dedicated by the lower classes of the populace and the work of inferior artists. And we have seen that when Greek art has attempted to portray a scene of offerings in a monumental work such as the frieze of the Parthenon, the subject has been almost overpowered by the effort to show the procession in the grandeur of its forms. If we wish for proof that the interest in a Greek work was for the appearance of the procession we need only compare the cows and sheep led to the sacrifice by the young Athenians with the animals of the "suovetaurilia" of the Romans. In the former case the sacrificial animals are taken as in life equally with the horses or any other figure of the cortège—the lowing cow trying to escape is an incomparable masterpiece—while in the latter case they go to the altar with a dignity and majesty which might be termed hieratic. In the Greek work they are only one of the many accentuated points of the procession; in the Roman work they are the fulcrum of the scene.

To give a precise indication of the difference which separates Greek art from Roman in this special field, we need only compare the altar of Pergamos with the Ara Pacis. The artists of

Pergamos knew no better way of honouring the gods and the dynasty than by recording the past of each, and therefore decorated the altar with a Gigantomachia and with the myth of Telephus. The Roman artists commemorated the gods by the representation of a sacrifice and showed honour to the Imperial dynasty by representing the Imperial family as present with Augustus in his office of high priest. Greek art wandered in the past, Roman art remained in the immediate present.

The second special characteristic of Roman commemorative art is the presence of the gods in their Greek aspect. This shows the hybrid origin of their art. There is so great a contrast between the figures of their gods and those of the Roman personages who form the crowd in the scene that they do not appear to have arisen in the mind of the same artist. The ideal type of the Greek gods does not harmonize with the realistic type of the Roman personages. The artist has worked out the figures of the gods on a traditional scheme but has taken the figures of the men directly from life. This contrast is not found in the frieze of the Parthenon. There the heads of the gods are similar to the heads of the men. The nobility expressed in the countenance of Zeus, or Athena, or Apollo, is the same as that which irradiates the countenance of one of the men or maidens or of the youths in the procession.

In order to grasp all the characteristics of Roman art attention must be paid to one last fact which is the direct consequence of the position taken by this art in relation to the religious conception. With the scene of sacrifice and religious rites there was introduced into art a new element which, except in the frieze of the Parthenon, seems to be unknown in the great monumental art of Greece: that is the crowd—the people!* What the modest art of Greek votive reliefs had in small measure, the participation of the people in the ceremony, here assumes gigantic proportions.

* E. Strong, *op. cit.*, p. 46 f.

Roman honorary art must in fact be considered as a version on a large scale of votive art. The people, represented by the family of the Emperor, by the dignitaries of State, by the army, and by the nameless crowd, end by filling and nearly choking up the scene.

The people are sometimes actors here, sometimes spectators. Greek art indeed had had spectators in its compositions: the gods are spectators in the Trojan episode on the frieze of the Treasury of the Siphnians, also the personages at the corner of the two pediments of the temple at Olympia, the gods and heroes, too, on the two pediments and on the frieze of the Parthenon are spectators, but these figures remain isolated elements in the picture, and assume the attitudes of the participators in the action and do not form the characteristic crowd of the people in Roman art. The problems therefore of form and space which Roman art has to face do not exist in Greek art.

There is no Roman honorary monument in which one at least of these three elements recorded is not present, the sacrificial scene, the presence of the gods in Greek aspect, the presence of the crowd, and there are many monuments in which all three are coexistent.

A striking contrast of conception, form and technique between the part imagined by the Greek artist and that created by the Roman artist, between the procession of Poseidon and Amphitrite and the sacrificial scene, is found in the altar of Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus, if these reliefs really belong to one single monument.

Gods in Greek aspect, sacrifices and the crowd we find too on the Ara Pacis, the monument with which the history of Roman religious and commemorative art in the service of the Imperial ideal really opens. There are now only fragments of the gods who were present at the sacrifices, but the slab with the figure of Tellus and the genii of the Air and Water (Fig. 152) will suffice to testify to the Greek

idealism of the divine figures. If the personages of the sacrificial scene (Fig. 153) be compared with these the measure of the contrast will be appreciated.

Sacrificial scenes before images of Greek gods are seen in four medallions (Figs. 154–157) belonging probably to the last period of the Flavii, fixed at a later date in the arch of Constantine.

We find an assembly of Greek gods in one of the reliefs of the arch of Trajan at Benevento (Fig. 158) and the usual sacrificial scene is contained in another relief (Fig. 159).

A complete enumeration of the sacrificial scenes on the Roman honorary monuments would be tedious, but there is probably no monument of a certain degree of importance from the arch of Augustus at Susa to the reliefs of the balustrade of the Rostra in the Roman Forum, from the column of Trajan to the relief of a monument to Marcus Aurelius (Fig. 160), which does not contain a sacrificial scene either in the act or in preparation. If the sacrificial scene disappears after the time of the Antonines from the Roman monuments, we recall, however, the arch of Galerius at Thessalonica — this is in keeping with the decadence of honorary art, which continued to celebrate the apotheosis of the prince, but no longer under the protection of the gods, as in the arch of Septimius Severus, or, as in the arch of Constantine, it covers new monuments with ancient works of art.

Later on, when sacrificial scenes have disappeared from the Roman honorary monuments, the figures of the gods disappear too, the crowd, the mass of figures in relief, continues to dominate the scene.

If the representation of the crowd has confronted Roman art with problems which did not affect the art of Greece, this is due to the position taken by her with regard to the religious conception. Now how has art resolved these problems? As in this solution we touch upon one of the

FIG. 154.—SACRIFICE TO APOLLO.
(Arch of Constantine, Rome.)
(*Photo Alinari.*)

FIG. 155.—SACRIFICE TO DIANA.
(Arch of Constantine, Rome.)
(*Photo Alinari.*)

FIG. 156.—SACRIFICE TO SYLVANUS.
(Arch of Constantine, Rome.)
(*Photo Alinari.*)

FIG. 157.—SACRIFICE TO HERCULES.
(Arch of Constantine, Rome.)
(*Photo Alinari.*)

[*See page 276.*]

To face p. 276.

FIG. 158.—MINERVA, JUPITER, JUNO, HERCULES, BACCHUS, CERES, MERCURY.

(Arch of Trajan, Benevento.)

(*Photo Moscioni.*)

FIG. 159.—SACRIFICE IN THE PRESENCE OF THE EMPEROR.

(Arch of Trajan, Benevento.)

(*Photo Alinari.*)

[*See page* 276.]

strongest points of Roman art which is said to have conquered the power of optical illusion,* and even in the late Constantinian period it was making progress in that direction,† it will be as well to consider the subject.

When the deeds of a prince were commemorated in the Egyptian or the Assyrian reliefs, it was found necessary to represent the people—the crowd—either under the form of an army or of a procession; but both these forms of art, as they had not succeeded in breaking through the parallelism of position, had to represent the figures in long rows either adjacent or superposed, and were unable to render the effect of a crowd or make the figures recede into the depths of the background.

The Greek artists succeeded after long study in breaking the unity of the plane and substituting the oblique for the parallel position. But Greek art had no need of the second term—how to represent the crowd. Greek art was essentially a religious and at the same time a commemorative art, and had almost entirely limited its work to the representation of myth. Among myths it preferred those which presented several similar groups by breaking up the general unity into several separate unities, such as the battles of the Giants, of the Centaurs, or of the Amazons. Subjects of this kind did not require depth in the plane, it was enough for the action to be carried out in single file before the spectator. In one work only was Greek art confronted by the problem of the representation of a crowd, in the frieze of the Parthenon. But the form in which this scene was conceived, that of a moving procession, of which the two ends only were standing still, had enabled the difficulty of the representation of a crowd to be eluded. Thus a large group such as a Gigantomachia or an Amazonomachia was displayed before

* F. Wickhoff, *Rom. Art* (trans. E. Strong), pp. 71 ff., 99 ff.

† A. Riegl, *Die spätrömische Kunst-Industrie nach den Funden in Oesterreich-Ungarn*, Wien, 1901, p. 45 ff.

the spectator in the direction of its length. Greek art had always been able to escape this difficulty because the nature of its subjects nearly always left the whole scene to the actors and supposed the spectators to be completely outside the work of art.

Roman art, on the other hand, in treating a sacrificial scene or, in a general way, any scene in which the Emperor in action is surrounded by his Court or by his soldiers, certainly imagined the spectators to be outside the scene, but also gave the function of spectators to many figures represented within the scene itself. Therefore it could not put these figures of spectators in a row behind the actor, but was obliged to place them around him further back in the plane and to imagine the background as further back still. And Roman art was thus brought by the subjects imposed upon it to adopt a new method of treatment of relief sculpture: and this was a treatment that would render possible a position facing the crowd.

This method of representing a crowd present in a scene has been the fundamental problem of Roman relief sculpture. The problem had not yet been propounded in the case of the altar of Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus, for the figures, though placed singly facing the spectator, do not form a compact mass but are distinctly separated from one another against the background. This had already been indicated in the sacrificial scene on the Ara Pacis and also for some of the figures of the cortège, who, instead of moving like the rest, seem to have stopped as if to be better in view of the spectator. The difficulty was also brought nearer to a solution in the reliefs of the arch of Titus with the Emperor's chariot and in the medallions of the Flavian period, containing cult scenes, fixed in the arch of Constantine. After reaching an equilibrium in the works of the period from Trajan to the Antonines, in the balustrade of the Rostra in the Forum, in the reliefs of Trajan in the arch

of Constantine, in the column of Trajan, in the arch of Trajan at Beneventum, in the reliefs of Hadrian in the palace of the Conservatori, in the reliefs from a monument of Marcus Aurelius fixed in the arch of Constantine or preserved in the palace of the Conservatori, the path of decadence is shown in the Constantinian reliefs of the arch of Constantine and in the reliefs of the base of the column of Theodosius at Constantinople. In these last reliefs the action has completely disappeared and the figures are only present in the scene. They are of course presented completely facing the spectator, but that does not prevent them from being also spectators, so that in the scene a sort of inertia and immobility is established. The depth of the relief and its pretence at illusion is regulated in Roman art by the connection which the artist has established by the distribution of the figures between the action and the spectators of the action, and when the action has been completely cancelled, when all the figures have become spectators and are represented quite in full face, they have become detached from the background with a strong contrast of light and shade. In the same way in earlier monuments they were represented as partly in action and partly in contemplation, part of them in profile and part of them full face, and were more or less in relief, and there was accordingly a graduated treatment of the planes.

The special kind of subjects to which Roman art was drawn from the position which it had taken with regard to the religious conception determined also its system of narration. It does not relate isolated and divided episodes, but develops by juxtaposition the successive moments of an action and repeats in them the figures of the chief actor or actors. This is the continuous system of narration.* This system was almost absent from Greek art because the gods and heroes lived in popular fancy by isolated actions, and had not a chain of events which filled their life. On the other hand

* F. Wickhoff, *Rom. Art* (trans. E. Strong), p. 8 ff.

this system was largely applied in Egyptian art to the illustration of the funerary books that the figures might comment from step to step on the successive actions of a god or a dead man, and also for the glorification of a prince by the representation of his deeds. And this system was to rise again in Roman art that it might serve for the same need—the commemoration of the successive deeds of the Emperor, and it may possibly have been already applied by Roman art in the paintings of triumphs of the republican period.

Thus in Roman art, as in Greek art, we have been able to make clear the influence upon form of the subjects, and besides the subjects, of the religious conception which determined their choice. The mythical character of the subjects by which Greek art was inspired through its religion had impelled it in the direction of idealism in the treatment of forms. The honorary character of Roman art not only indicated an incurable dualism in its types, between the idealism of the figures of the gods taken from Greek tradition and the realism of the human figures taken from life, but also imposed new problems in the representation of space and the system of narration. Human art in effect does not impose problems of form through caprice or excess of virtuosity, it imposes them only when they are questions of life or death for the subjects to be treated: here also in the centre of all progress in art is the force of religious inspiration.

We can recognize this force equally in the characteristics of Roman portraiture. The same remarks may be made with regard to this as we made on the Etruscan portraits. The Roman portrait shows greater naturalism, or rather, a less degree of idealization in naturalism than the Greek portrait, because it does not struggle like the latter within the barriers of a secular idealistic tradition. The Roman portrait preserves the effigy of the dead—like the *imagines maiorum* in wax—

FIG. 161.—ROMAN HUSBAND AND WIFE.

Sepulchral Group. (Vatican.)

(Photo Alinari.)

FIG. 162.—EPISODES IN THE LIFE OF A MAGISTRATE.

(Uffizi, Florence.)

(Photo Alinari.)

[*See page* 282.]

FIG. 163.—FIGHT BETWEEN ROMANS AND BARBARIANS.
Front of a Sarcophagus. (Coll. Ludovisi, Museo delle Terme, Rome.)
(*Photo Alinari.*)

FIG. 164.—GIGANTOMACHIA.
Front of a Sarcophagus. (Vatican.)
(*Photo Alinari.*)

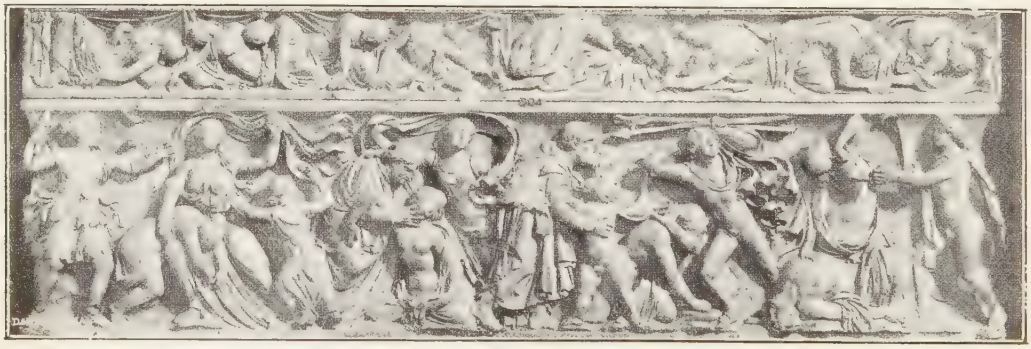

FIG. 165.—SLAYING OF THE NIOBIDS.
Front of a Sarcophagus. (Vatican.)
(*Photo Alinari.*)
[*See pages* 282, 283, 284.]

or it sends down to posterity the image of the prince or of the great men then held in honour, it is a portrait of funerary or honorary character, which is created by a free relation with nature unimpeded by the intervention of tradition. It corresponds to a different spirit from that of the Greek portraiture which with the figures of Homer, Anacreon and Sophokles would reconstruct an ideal image of the past, and in its naturalism was helped by the absence of an artistic tradition.

If Imperial Rome gave life to a special form of art with its own characteristics, differing from Greek art both in forms and subjects, preserving only the figure forms of the gods, it must not be supposed that the story of Greek myth which was the work of centuries was lost to the Roman world. The adaptability of Greek myths to decoration made them favourite subjects for the ornamentation of the walls of houses, and besides this they found an opening in the funerary art for the decoration of sarcophagi. In this branch of art Roman art followed the path of the Etruscan cinerary urns. Funerary Art.

A Greek myth was certainly not the subject best suited to a Roman funerary monument. Funerary art might have found inspiration in a very different field, in the custom referred to by Latin literary tradition of keeping wax images of the ancestors. In effect, Roman funerary art has preserved as a characteristic feature the isolated representation of the defunct.

Certainly this custom is not peculiar to Roman art alone, for the chief care of all funerary art is to preserve the image of the dead for the future, as if this representation were a security for the survival of the individual. We find the same principle in the funeral art of Egypt with its statues of the Ka of the deceased and in Etruscan art with its canopi, stelai and funeral groups. But each of these forms of art

wove round it a garland of other motives: Egyptian art turned its attention to the representation of the material and moral fate of the dead in the life beyond the tomb, and Etruscan art to showing a picture of the sensual joys of the world beyond the grave.

Any such form of art is absent from the funerary conception of the Romans. The isolated portrait of the defunct is the favourite subject of the earliest centuries. See, among other examples, the fine group of a husband and wife (Fig. 161)—and so it remains on all the sepulchral stones of the Empire scattered through the provinces even to the latest times.

But the Imperial idea, which had inspired most of the great Roman monuments, was bound to be reflected in funerary art also. The modest magistrate whose labours had been of good service to the idea of Rome liked to have his services recorded on a monument, and thus arose the type of sarcophagus on which were represented in sequence the chief events of his administrative career (Fig. 162). Not the thought of the past but that of the future inspired this type of monument. The events in the life of a magistrate were of interest, not, like the occupations recorded on the Greek stelai, for the compassion they would excite, but for the renown they would ensure among posterity. And this glory was sought also by the victorious general, who would cause himself to be represented in the thick of the battle with Barbarians (Fig. 163).

We find a record of past life in the funeral monuments which bear representations of subjects from the trade or occupation carried on by the deceased in his lifetime, such as the monument of M. Vergilius Eurysaces, the baker, on whose tomb are sculptured reliefs representing the baking of bread. A very different spirit suggested similar subjects in Egyptian wall decorations. The monument of Eurysaces shows no care for a future existence, except the ill-concealed

pride which caused him to think it worth while to send down to posterity a record of the trade which had brought him wealth, just as warlike deeds which had brought glory to a soldier might be recorded on his tomb—another foreshadowing of the Imperial idea!

A mixture of subjects and therefore of different ideas is seen in the sepulchre of the Hateria gens: mourners round the death-bed, portraits of the deceased, images of the gods and other subjects whose significance is still uncertain.

But the funerary art of Rome has followed the same method as its commemorative art. What it could not create because it was not in accordance with the spirit of the religion was borrowed from the art of another country in the form presented by that art. In the commemorative monuments the gods are represented in Greek form. In funerary art Greek myths are introduced into the decorative sculpture of the sarcophagi. Roman religion had no special mythology of its own, and the few myths connected with the origins of the city are connected with Greek tradition. These few Roman myths are reproduced on some sarcophagi as on the funeral altars. For the rest this art draws from the inexhaustible spring of Greek mythology. It is not known whether a symbolic significance with an appeal to death is attributable to these Greek myths, or if they are purely decorative in intention. We expressed the same doubt as to the Etruscan cinerary urns. In any case Roman art, once it had had recourse to Greek art for the decoration of funerary monuments, had to accept this art in the spirit to which it had attained after centuries of internal elaboration. The same thing had already been done by Etruscan funerary art. Can we then wonder that the ashes of an Etruscan were collected in an urn under the protection of Actæon torn by the dogs or of the enchanting Sirens, or that a Latin should sleep his eternal sleep beneath the protection of the Giants fighting with the Gods (Fig. 164), of Medea, witch and adventuress, of Achilles,

slayer of Penthesilea, or of Niobe in anguish for the death of her children (Fig. 165). But, as in the case of the figures of the gods, Greek art could only give to the Romans what it had to give.

This want of direct inspiration coming straight from the indigenous religion, renders Roman funerary art poor in comparison with the funerary art of the Egyptians, Greeks or Etruscans. It seems as if the Romans lacked the sense of death—that feeling which so terribly oppressed the Egyptians, which gave profound calm to the Greeks and gave such material joy and terrible torment to the Etruscans. This agrees with the fundamental features of the Roman character. The Romans were essentially conquerors of life: in earthly life only did they find joy and the reason for existence. And above all they had a care for those who would come after them and therefore created great and original honorary works of art. They did not trouble about their own fate after this life and had therefore no funerary art of their own.

Latin and Roman Architecture.

The Romans have taken the same direction in architecture. In the Latin period the cities of Latium had from the Greeks the same temples as those of Etruria and Campania. The plan is sometimes that of the Greek temple *in antis*, sometimes that of large size with spacious vestibule which the Etruscans had derived from their house. This indigenous type was used in the temple of Jupiter on the Capitol and in all its successive restorations as well as in its imitations in the provinces. The decoration also of the Latin temples was similar both as to subject and arrangement to that of the Etruscan and Campanian temples. Vitruvius (III, 3, 5) and Pliny (XXXV, 158) refer to these decorative figures of the archaic temples.

But while the Etruscans had at this primitive period shown

originality in the construction of the hypogeum, the Latins, lacking their feeling and care for the dead, have no funeral architecture. They placed their dead in graves in a simple sarcophagus. The necropolis of Præneste is a noteworthy example of this for the period of the fourth to the second century B.C. And though we find at an earlier date something more imposing than a simple grave — the archaic Barberini and Bernardini tombs of Præneste for example, where we can distinguish a sort of chamber—we must not forget that the furniture of these tombs is the same as that of the tombs of the same date in Etruria, and as there has been an importation of foreign funeral furniture, foreign influence may have modified the form of the tomb. The as yet unsolved problem is whether this influence was Etruscan. However this may be, wherever grandiose funeral monuments exist in Latin territory, Etruscan influence is evident; we have an example of this in the tomb so-called of the Horatii and Curiatii near Albano.

Latin architecture therefore, limited to the temple, would have been only a modest provincial episode of Greek architecture if the Imperial idea had not affected this branch of art also and Latin architecture had not been followed by Roman architecture. A comparison of plastic art with Roman architecture gives us one of the best proofs that religion, as a fundamental element of civilization as well as a conception and valuation of life, often stamps the same imprint upon all the manifestations of life itself. The Romans had received the figures of the gods from the Greeks and had been unable to create anything original. In the same way they received the form of the temple from the Greeks, making it taller and more imposing in size, preferring the Ionic and Corinthian to the Doric and leaving complete liberty to the architect, so that he disturbed the eurythmic organism of the Greek temple and confused round buildings with rectangular, while in the end, from all this working up of styles already begun by Hellenism, which

had in many ways made preparation for the Empire, there emerged no new creation of fixed forms which could be called the Roman temple.

But the art of figure representation had nevertheless established its originality. Rome had put the Emperor in the place of the gods, and near the image of the Emperor were reliefs commemorating his deeds. It is to this tendency of the Roman mind that the association of the cult of the Emperor or of Rome with that of the gods in the same building is owing, and thus the temple is at the same time both a religious and a commemorative monument. The association of the two cults must have had no small part in inspiring the architect to make use of a blend and combination of elements from the Greek temple with elements from buildings of public utility. Even the altar was used for commemorative purposes at Rome—see the Ara Pacis of Augustus.

But we find in plastic art, beside the works in which the artist has represented both the gods and the Emperor, others in which the Emperor alone appears, so also in architecture we find some commemorative buildings exclusively dedicated to him. And herein lies the greater originality of Roman architecture. For we can trace in Hellenistic and other more ancient civilizations the prototype of the arch and the column with figure decoration, but the commemorative arch and column with reliefs of subjects taken from the deeds of a great man are a purely Roman creation. During four centuries, from the arch of Augustus at Susa to the column of Theodosius at Constantinople, the commemorative architecture of Rome rises, triumphs and falls into decadence. And commemorative architecture provides those tasks for sculpture which were no longer offered by the temple, for while the column and the arch were covered with figures from top to bottom, especially during the period from Trajan onward, the decoration of the temple was at that time limited to the pediments when it was not altogether absent.

It is a characteristic indication of this Roman tendency that the commemorative character is impressed also upon the funeral monuments. Through that absence of a sense of death which we have pointed out in Roman civilization, it has created little in this line that is original. The form of the lid of the sarcophagus oscillates between the house and the couch, that is, it is on the one hand connected with the Greek sarcophagus and on the other with the Etruscan urn or sarcophagus. As it had reduced the altar to a commemorative monument, it reduces it to a funeral monument. As in the temples it takes the form of the sepulchre from ordinary buildings—the Via Appia of Rome and the road outside the Herculaneum Gate at Pompeii show singular types. Moreover, it takes the hypogeum from Etruria and the pyramid and the obelisk from Egypt. But when at length this funeral architecture, tired of borrowing and adapting, tries to create something really Roman, it makes of the sepulchre a commemorative monument. And though in the case of the mausoleum of Augustus and that of Hadrian this characteristic might be suggested by the dignity of the persons to be interred there, when the tomb of the Julii at S. Rémy, the oven of M. Vergilius Eurysaces and the sepulchre of the Hateria family have assumed the same character, it becomes clear that it is dictated by the spirit of the age.

But architecture is not an art whose tasks are all for the service of religion. It must provide for many other needs of civilization. But these needs vary according to the direct or indirect impulse given by religion to the whole life of a people. In Greece the manifestations of the physical and intellectual life, favoured by religion and bound up with it, had required of architecture palæstra and stadium, theatre and hippodrome. In Rome, where dominion and politics were everything, and where politics consisted chiefly in keeping the people in subjection by providing them with material comfort, there arose on the one hand for the use of the prince Imperial palaces of a size and magnificence unknown to Greek civilization, while on the

other there arose for the benefit of the people basilicas and baths, amphitheatres and porticoes. The greater part of these buildings certainly recall their Hellenic prototypes, for many manifestations of Roman public life had their antecedents in Hellenism, but Rome alone was able to derive from them the greatest degree of utility in the service of the Empire. And in this point also the Romans showed themselves the conquerors of life on earth.

Roman Literature.

Like all other civilizations, Roman civilization in its literature presents the same characteristics as in its plastic art. The religious conception has guided the one and the other. We have seen the juxtaposition in Imperial art of purely Greek elements and elements suggested by Roman life: this same juxtaposition is found in literature. And as the Roman world is indebted for its art to contact with the Greek world, Roman literature only arose through imitation of Greek literature. It would not have arisen and would not have survived if the Latins had stopped at their first religious compositions of utilitarian or magical character—which had to a certain degree felt the influence of Etruscan literature. Roman literature had the same characteristics and the same greatness as Imperial art. It owes its content to the meeting of the Greek religious conception with a very Roman feeling for life. In its principal works as in its commemorative monuments it seems as if gods in Greek form were assisting at scenes of Roman life. All that is myth, that is conception of the deity is Greek; all that is real life is Roman. This contrast is nowhere more clearly visible than in the account of the descent of Æneas to Avernus in the VIth book of the *Æneid*. This canto, imitated from the Homeric Nekyia, peopled with the same mythical figures, contains, nevertheless, one part which is substantially Roman, the prediction of the future greatness of Rome (VI, 756 ff.). The words in which Anchises terminates his prediction before

his praises of M. Claudius Marcellus and C. Marcellus, son of Octavia (851 ff.):

> "Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento—
> Hæc tibi erunt artes—pacique imponere morem,
> Parcere subiectis et debellare superbos"

the words so often misused by late rhetoric, when replaced with the context at the end of this account of the journey into a Greek Hades, are a just comment upon the works of the great monumental art of Rome which celebrated the victories of the Emperors under the protection of Greek gods.

If we consider the special position of the religious conception of the Romans and their civilization with regard to the Greek works of art and literature we can understand the mutual attraction of Greek forms and Roman subjects, and the general direction taken by literature seems as logical as that of art. If we leave out of the question the works imitated from the Greek, such as the epic and a great part of the lyric poetry, comedy and tragedy, the kinds of literature most in favour with the Romans were those of practical use in ordinary life—history and rhetoric, which were to hand down to posterity the name of Rome. And if the Romans had no philosophy of their own it was because it could not, as in Greek civilization, spring forth from the contrast between real life and the religious conception. The Romans were attached by tradition to a form of religion still deeply imbued with magic, which only expected from the gods protection in the present and the future; they had no occasion to search out the past life of the gods and did not perceive a certain want of harmony between the religious fables and real life; they did not meditate on the creation of the world and after that on the nature and origin of the universe. Instead of philosophy they had law, with which they regulated the practical life of men.

If we remain within the circle of a single form of art or literature we cannot clearly distinguish how the religious conception

has guided the one and the other. But if we compare the literature and art of Egypt, Greece and Rome we shall see what a different impress has been given to them by religion. The art and literature of Egypt were magical, preoccupied only with the present and the future: art without myth, literature without history. Greek art and literature were preoccupied only with the past, with the ancient life of the gods, of the heroes and of men: the art is mythical, the literature is historical. The art and literature of Rome were between two fires, that of the indigenous spirit tending to a magical and utilitarian object, wishing to ensure the protection of the gods and wishing to hand down to posterity the deeds of the present, and that of Greek culture, which suggested the imitation of its artistic and literary forms dedicated to the celebration of the past. No longer, it is true, with the primitive spirit of Egyptian civilization, but with the tendency innate in every people to seek present protection above all in religion, Roman civilization found it necessary to adapt its indigenous inheritance of ideas to the different conception of the civilization which came from Greece. Hence the peculiar characteristics of its literature and its art, hence the diversity of its constituting elements, a literature and an art non-original when they present Greek myths, but original in form and content when they give life to Roman ideas.

Passage from Roman to Christian Art.

If the literature that corresponded to the deepest and widest needs of Roman society had found its way of development earlier than plastic art and for the same reason had a longer span of life before it, the art bound to the Imperial idea rose and set with it. Its greatest triumphs were celebrated from the time of Augustus to that of Constantine, but not being attached by indissoluble bonds to any religious conceptions it could not use this conception as a weapon of defence. And then, when a new religion, Christianity, brought in a new

moral code and a new iconography, Pagan art could offer no resistance. The art struggling for the right to live was not a religious art.

It must now be recognized that if Christian art has assumed an established character and we can define the celebrations of the past life of the divinity, and if this art is based upon history, this is due to the Greek and not the Roman spirit. But if Christian art, fortified by the Greek spirit, succeeded in dominating Europe, this is owing to the Roman civilization which scattered its monuments over the furthest provinces of the Empire in the service of the Imperial idea and prepared the way for the spread of the new conception of Christianity. It might be disputed whether the origins of Christian art are to be sought in the East or in the West, but it was diffused by the same paths over which Roman art had passed: Christianity raised herself upon the idea of Rome.

IX

BUDDHISM

Absence of Brahmanic art—Buddhism—Buddhist art and its origin—Symbolism in Buddhist art—Development of Buddhist art in the direction of iconolatry—Absence of a funerary art—Form in Buddhist art and its derivatives—Buddhist architecture—Indian and Buddhist literature.

THERE are no data as to the connection between religion and art in India before the reformers Mahâvîra and Gautama created out of Brahmanism the two creeds known as Jainism and Buddhism. In fact, it was not until several centuries after the time of these two reformers, who lived in the sixth and fifth centuries B.C., that plastic art came to the assistance of these doctrines.

Absence of Brahmanic Art.

Our information concerning Indian religion during this period is derived exclusively from literary works, more especially the Vedic Hymns, and the commentaries, laws and instructions evolved by subtle divines out of the wisdom of the Vedas.

From these literary sources it is to be inferred that Brahmanism consisted of a polytheism in which different gods represented in somewhat indefinite forms forces of nature. But, side by side with this vague polytheism was an element of animism and possibly of totemism, the special form which animism assumes in the relations of mutual protection between animals and natural phenomena.

The Brahmanic faith had not claimed the services of

plastic art: it was in the same stage as the Roman, Celtic and Germanic religions before they came into contact with Greek art.

Nevertheless, from time to time magic practices had led to the creation of Brahmanic images. But this magic art, essentially individual, never became a tradition, never produced works which, connected by affinity of style, could last for centuries. That this is so is confirmed by the investigations of archæologists. India has not been as thoroughly excavated as have other Eastern lands, but up to the present time nothing has been discovered which can be attributed to the Brahmanic period or to the inspiration of Brahmanism. No definite date has been ascribed to the few rough graffiti of human and geometrical figures found in different parts of India, nor do they offer any special characteristics which would prove their connection with religion. Moreover, certain features in the development of later religious art, especially of Buddhist art, prove that the followers of this creed were not wont to represent their gods in human form. The use of symbols rather than images of the divinity on the columns of King Asoka (middle of the third century B.C.), which constitute the earliest monuments of Buddhism, the substitution of a symbol for the figure of Buddha in the depiction of scenes from his life, prove the existence of a prevailing aniconic tendency in this country. And these indications of the contents of Buddhist art are confirmed by its form, seeing that the latter has no connection with an indigenous tradition of figure representation but is wholly derived from an extraneous art, namely, that of Greece with a mixture of Persian art.

In short, to Jainism and Buddhism must be attributed the origin of religious art in India. The two creeds, although both derived from Brahmanism and almost contemporaneous, present doctrinal differences. But inasmuch as

their respective doctrines affect us only from the standpoint of plastic art, and in this domain Jainism seems to depend on Buddhism, in other words, only to have created an art of its own in imitation of the latter, we shall confine our attention to Buddhism, and the information which follows concerning the art of this creed must be taken to apply, in the main, to that of Jainism.

Buddhism.

Gautama, or Siddhârtha, born in the latter part of the sixth century B.C., was the son of Suddhodana, King of Kapila-vastu, and Mâyâ his wife. The young prince grew up strong in body and active in mind. A son, Râhula, was born to him and his wife, the Princess Yasodharâ. But the father abandoned Court and kindred, for after the divinity had appeared to him under four aspects, as an old man, a sick person, a corpse and an ascetic, he decided to renounce the world. Accompanied by Tshanna, his charioteer, he escaped from the palace at night and reached the river Anavamâ. Here he gave to the faithful Tshanna his arms, jewels and steed, exchanged clothes with a mendicant, and begged his way to Râdsha-gaha, the capital of the kingdom of Magadha, where he devoted himself to the study of Brahmanic philosophy. Dissatisfied with this doctrine, he withdrew to the place where now stands the temple of Buddha-Gayâ. There he endured the greatest privations until he came to realize the folly of trying to attain to perfect wisdom by starvation of the body. This inner struggle of the mind was materialized in the legend of the victory gained over the demons that Mâra, the Evil Spirit of Passion, let loose upon him, From this scene of victory where he attained to the state of Sambodhi or Enlightenment, and himself became the Enlightened One, the Buddha, he went back to the world to teach men how to attain to freedom by self-control and love of their fellow-creatures. He converted people of all

classes; his followers soon afterwards formed a community of monks which constituted the nucleus of the subsequent monasticism. In the course of one of his pilgrimages he died near Kusinârâ, or, to use the proper expression, he entered Nirvâna. His remains were distributed among the princes and the neighbouring States.

The fundamental principle of his doctrine, which triumphed throughout the whole of Asia, was the necessity of annihilating the love of life. Life is present pain, preceded by pain suffered in the previous existences, to be followed by the pain of the future existences. Such is the theory which he found underlying the old Brahmanic faith: the transmigration of souls. There exists a universal soul (the *brahman*) from which are derived the *âtman* or individual souls; they materialize in various ways, for they may take the form of a god, man, animal, plant or mineral, seeing that every substance and every being in the universe is animate. As all individual souls are immortal, like the universal soul of which they are fragments, on the death of the being or destruction of the substance they are again merged in the universal soul, only to separate from it by entering other beings and other substances. And, according as their actions in the previous existence were good or evil, individual souls will enter a superior being or an inferior substance, a god, a man of superior order or even a vegetable or mineral in the next existence. This rotation of life (*sansâra*) is endless. Man may hope for rebirth in better conditions, but has above all to fear a worse reincarnation.

This doctrine weighed heavily on mankind, for death itself was no release from earthly woe, nor the means of transition to a better world. On the contrary, it was the beginning of new evils and fresh pain. The divines sought to deliver man from those never-ending changes of existence and to enable individual souls to unite for ever with the universal soul. Amongst the several remedies proposed,

asceticism appeared to offer the best chance of freedom. To subdue the flesh, to repress, as far as possible, the passion for enjoyment, to trample upon one's own existence whilst alive, this was the way to escape rebirth and to cause the individual to re-enter the universal soul.

Such was the doctrine which prevailed when Gautama in Gayâ came to realize that bodily torture cannot set man free. To destroy life it is not enough to martyrize the individual, one must destroy the individual desire to live. It is not by subdual of the body, the transitory outward form, but by subdual of the soul, the eternal principle, that one attains to freedom and enters Nirvâna. Man must strive to reduce to a minimum all that binds him to life, and as love of one's fellow-men and of animals involves self-sacrifice, self-dominion and charity lead men to freedom.

We must deprive Buddhism of the halo conferred on it by the students of the last century, and, whilst admitting that it contained a high moral conception with regard to the control of life, love and charity, we must acknowledge that, in reality, it is nothing but the argument adduced to meet an animistic conception of the universe, an argument more satisfactory than that of the old Brahmanic asceticism, for it allows men to live their lives on earth without self-torture, but, just as Brahmanic asceticism was a conception of the priests to free man from the oppression of animism, so Buddhism was a conception of the laity to attain the same end. Asceticism destroyed life, whilst Buddhism allowed man to live it.

This is, in fact, the distinctive feature of all animistic conceptions, to leave man to contend with a series of isolated forces, working in the universe, which, according to whether they are hostile or friendly, he must repel or attract. Theism delivers him from this necessity for continual action, because it renders a few beings, or a single higher entity, responsible for the protection of man against all the forces in the universe.

The Brahmanic religion had arrived at theism without losing its deep substratum of primitive animism, which had only changed its constitution, adopting a temporal, in place of a spatial, one. In the animistic conception formed by primitive peoples, animate beings extend into space in a long line of friends and enemies; in Brahmanism animate beings extend into time in the same way. Standing one behind the other, they wait to seize upon man and absorb him, for all the future incarnations through which the individual must pass are, as it were, so many enemies from whose clutches he must escape, so many friends to whom he must return. It is no longer possible to define the channels of human thought through which Brahmanism passed before it arrived at such systematization of its animism, but one commonplace must be erased from the book of human knowledge, viz., that of comparing this essentially primitive animism with the Pythagorean doctrine of metempsychosis, also, the still greater absurdity of drawing a parallel between the philosophical pantheism of classical Greece or modern times, which rests on a very different psychical basis.

Buddhist Art and its Origin.

If we now turn to consider the influence exercised by Brahmanic animism on the development of plastic art, there is one thing that strikes us at first sight, viz., the absence of an art to assist it. But when we take into consideration the peculiar form assumed by this animism, it is easy to account for the absence of Brahmanic art. Animistic peoples set about creating for themselves an art when they realized that it would enable them to subdue and impose their own will upon the countless individual souls which inherit the universe. Such a form of animism holds that life is worth living, defending and prolonging. But Brahmanic animism, on the other hand, had come to see in the future incarnations which formed man's destiny a series of sorrows which it was wiser to avoid. Far from wishing to

attract and prolong existence, it desired to repel and destroy it. It had to begin by withdrawing from and destroying present existence. Such a conception contains, below the surface, an element of aversion from plastic art.

Moreover, magic art creates a world of forms which have an existence of their own side by side with the real world; with regard to imagery, it tends to multiply life. Thus, from this standpoint also, its aim is opposed to the tenets of doctrines which seek to extinguish life.

Again, plastic art necessarily fixes beings under a definite aspect; in other words, it brings out one of their special forms. Here also it contrasted with Brahmanic animism which, in the course of successive incarnations, could only perceive the transitory aspect assumed by the particle of the universal soul. The soul alone was unchangeable and eternal, and art could not portray it.

Thus, Brahmanic animism had turned aside from art. But we must not fall into the mistake of thinking that Buddhism was in a better position. Buddhism was but one of the arguments adduced, one of the remedies applied to Indian animism. But it worked no essential change in the original conception, for it also aimed at escaping from life, and endeavoured not to enhance the value of the form which life assumed in its continual evolution.

How then comes it that Buddhism possessed what Brahmanism lacked, viz., a figured art? This art must be attributed to the influence of a different religion and another art, viz., the religion and art of Greece.

Divers elements of form and substance bear witness to the origin of Buddhist art, but there is also a chronological argument. Buddha lived between the second half of the sixth and the first half of the fifth century B.C. His doctrine, collected by his disciples and confirmed by the Councils, only reached the height of its influence when adopted as faith by Piyadassi or Asoka, the third king of the new

dynasty, who, together with Sandrakottos, had occupied the State of Magadha. Asoka, who lived about the middle of the third century B.C., founded innumerable monasteries, and according to tradition erected 84,000 stûpas. Now, not only are there no traces of plastic art connected with Buddhism which can be ascribed to the two centuries between the death of Buddha and the reign of Asoka, but, in the monuments which can definitely be attributed to this sovereign, on the columns containing the edicts which favoured the new religion, there are symbolic figures and nothing else, which fact proves that Buddhism had not yet received its heritage of art. If the nucleus of his doctrines had contained an inspiration towards plastic art, it would not have waited for two centuries to avail itself of the latter. Although it did not become the official creed of the nation before the reign of Asoka, it had already reached the masses. Christianity did not wait for Constantine for the use of images, even in a symbolical sense.

Buddhism was without images for three centuries because it was only after this protracted period that it came into contact with a plastic art, that of Greece, which inspired it to create one of its own. The Oriental expedition of Alexander the Great (327–326 B.C.) brought the country under the direct influence of Greek civilization. After the death of Alexander and many other vicissitudes, Bactria formed the nucleus of a new kingdom, viz., the Græco-Bactrian, which reached the height of its prosperity between the end of the third and the beginning of the second centuries B.C. It succeeded in extending its boundaries over a great part of the region of the five rivers, the Punjâb. But this kingdom, being exposed to constant attacks from the Indo-Scythians and to the exactions of the Parthians, gradually declined until, in the latter part of the second century B.C., it finally lost Bactria, the mother-province, which was occupied by the Indo-Scythians, its enemies from the north. The power of the Greeks, thus

confined to the border provinces of India, hemmed in on every side by Oriental barbarism, finally fell into absolute decay, and, even in these regions, succumbed to the rule of the Indo-Scythians.

Brief as was the existence of the Græco-Bactrian kingdom, it yet contrived to produce a new art, viz., Buddhist art. In fact, this art came into being just when the kingdom was at the height of its prosperity. Of the two schools of Buddhist art, that of Northern India and that of the ancient region of Gândhâra,* the territory which lies on India's north-western frontier, the most ancient is not, as was originally supposed, the former, but the latter, which owed its life to Græco-Bactrian civilization. In fact, Buddhist art arose in the first place from an urgent need felt by the Greeks who inclined towards Buddhism, and Buddhism created for itself an art when it came to realize that the latter was indispensable to its dissemination.

Not only chronological evidence, but also the form of Buddhist art, supports this statement. A comparison of the different arts shows that those which came into being of their own accord, and are not imitated from other arts, start on parallel schemes. In other words, they show ignorance of the principles of foreshortening, light and shade and perspective in drawing and painting, of foreshortening and grouping in relief and statuary. On the other hand, even the earliest existing monuments of Buddhist art, whether painting, relief or statuary, bear witness to the fact that these means of representation in space had been mastered. As no indigenous precedents have been discovered to explain this mastery, we must perforce conclude that Buddhist art acquired this knowledge of the oblique from the art of some other country. Now, as at that time Greek art alone had this knowledge, it must have taken its inspiration from Greece.

But it is not only the knowledge of representation in space

* A. Foucher, *L'Art Gréco-bouddhique du Gandhâra*, i., Paris, 1905.

which indicates that Buddhist art owed its form to that of Greece, the resemblance between the figures also betrays its origin. Some few mythical beings of Brahmanic conception have assumed in the art of this religion features resembling those of similar beings of Greek conception. This is especially true with regard to images of Buddha, for, three centuries having elapsed since the death of the founder of Buddhism, his features were beyond recall, and as for artistic purposes an image had to be created, it was composed of elements taken from Greek figures.

Thirdly, the character of Buddhist art furnishes proof of its Greek origin, for it shows the changes introduced into the religious conception under the influence of this art. None of the Buddhist doctrines contained any principle which encouraged the development of a magic art, nor did Buddhism require idols or votive offerings during life on earth, or the provision of necessaries for life after death. The very fate which befell the body of Buddha shows that there were no arguments in support of a funerary art. For his corpse was divided into countless relics and distributed throughout the most distant parts of India.

Now, seeing that the Buddhist doctrines contained nothing favourable to the development of a figured art, from what features of this religion could the art derive its inspiration, when it had once been proved indispensable for the making of converts? These converts were Greek, or, more correctly, the indigenous population of the Græco-Bactrian kingdom, now imbued with Greek civilization. In character, the new figured art must therefore correspond to the spirit of Greek religious art, which, by this time, had boldly asserted its commemorative character, for it regarded religion in the light of a solemn celebration of the past. But in the Greek religion the past was composed of fragments. The traditional limitation of the work of the gods and heroes to one or two exploits made it impossible to construct a whole cycle of deeds round the isolated figure of a god or hero. Herakles and Theseus had

benefited from art inasmuch as they had been celebrated for several successive exploits, but these deeds of valour resembled each other; their entirety, rather than the life of a hero, constituted the repetition of the same unity.

Greek art came to realize this deficiency during the Hellenistic period. It was revealed by the erudite study of the myths and by the new political constitution. All the literary labours performed in connection with the myths had been directed towards this end, to fill up the gaps in mythological tradition, and to weave out of mythology from the creation of the world to the dawn of history an uninterrupted narrative containing no breach or reiteration. Mythographers had borrowed the methods and aims of historians, for they attempted to preserve continuity when relating the exploits of their gods and heroes.

The new political constitution had worked towards the same end. Alexander the Great was the first of a type of Eastern princes of whom Greece had had no previous experience. The Oriental prince, the earthly representative of the divine power, was, by virtue of his magnificent exploits, a living god. All that he did was magnified in the eyes of the people and all his exploits were made known. Thus, the new political constitution, which originated with Alexander the Great, was maintained by the Hellenic princes, and came to an end with the Roman emperors, established the central figure of the society which Hellenic democracy had banished from the history of Mediterranean peoples, and considered, in the light of a historical patrimony bequeathed to the whole nation, the deeds which this central figure accomplished.

If we view this predominance of a single individual over the gray masses in conjunction with the favourite tendency of mythographers to narrate in uninterrupted sequence the exploits of the gods and heroes, we shall be able to deduce the tendency of contemporary religious spirit and the direction in which it would influence art, causing it to throw into relief an isolated

figure, all of whose exploits would be depicted in unbroken sequence.

But Greek religious art could not pursue this course with the material with which it had dealt for centuries and which had already traditional designs and arrangements. Nevertheless, the frieze of Telephus on the great altar of Pergamos is an indication of the latent change that was creeping over art and religion. The prince of Pergamos was too deeply imbued with Greek civilization to extol his own recent exploits, after the fashion of an Egyptian or Assyrian ruler; he preferred to glorify a hero of the past, Telephus, son of Herakles and founder of Pergamos, nor did he content himself with depicting a single exploit; all the life of his hero is set forth in uninterrupted sequence. Thus the Telephus frieze indicates the direction religious art would have taken had it been called to perform new tasks.

It received the call from two new creeds—Buddhism and Christianity. We shall subsequently dwell on the similarity of the fate of these two religions when they came into contact with the art of another nation. Meanwhile, let it suffice to observe that the character of Buddhist art (the first of the two to spring from Greek art) furnishes clear proof of the influence exercised over religion by an art which had already acquired its own means of representation. Only the Greek spirit could have created Buddhist art out of the material of another creed. For Buddhist art is commemorative, it concentrates round a single figure, and depicts, in sequence, all the episodes in the life of this individual, because this was the stage in the elaboration of religious material at which the Greek spirit had arrived.

From every other point Buddhism appeared unassailable. Greek art was helpless before the nucleus of this doctrine. Buddhism was a solution to the problem of life, a philosophy, and Greek art, the art of a nation which produced the greatest of philosophies, had never attempted to clothe philosophical conceptions in artistic form. On the contrary, one of its best

features, the one which enabled it to preserve eternal youth, was its unwillingness to philosophize with forms. It had always been content to depict without trying to reason. This is natural, inasmuch as it had always been the handmaid of religion, whereas philosophy had arisen and developed in opposition to religion in order to find the solution to problems which religion could neither ask nor solve.

Thus Greek art, helpless before the nucleus of the Buddhist doctrines, had perceived the figure of the reformer standing out in relief beyond them, had grasped the story of his life and attacked this, the vulnerable spot. Its scrutiny of the past included not only the recent incarnation of Gautama, Bodhisattva down to the revelation, later the Buddha, but all the previous incarnations which, according to Brahmanic animism, he had assumed as Bodhisattva, and which he himself, being miraculously enabled to recall, had related in the Jâtakas.

The incarnation or incarnations of Buddha had gradually prepared the way for the revelation; they had constituted a continual effort towards the attainment of the end which should form the goal of every mortal, and in the representation of art his incarnations acquired ethical value as examples. Thus for the first time in the history of human art there asserted itself an aim diametrically opposed to the end towards which art had originally striven. The art of primitive peoples had attempted, through its religious creations, to act on surrounding nature and on the beings whose business it was to control nature; it had had a magic purpose. To a certain extent Greek art had freed itself from this absorption, for, although it clung to idols and votive offerings, it had chiefly concentrated on the representation of the past exploits of gods and heroes. But this commemorative Greek art, in its general tendency at least, failed from the point of view of exemplification. It is possible that the ethical spirit of that time saw, in the struggles between Giants, Centaurs, and Amazons, and in some few of the adventures of Herakles and Theseus, the triumph of order over disorder, but the majority

FIG. 166.—GAUTAMA RENOUNCING THE LIFE OF A PRINCE.

Relief of Jamâlgarhî. (Museum, Lahore.)

(*Burgess*, "*Journ. of Indian Art*," 1898, pl. 12, n. 1.)

[*See page* 305.]

To face p. 304.

Visit of Prince Prasênadshit to Buddha.

(*Cunningham*, "*Bharhut*," pl. 13.)

Descent of Buddha from heaven at Sankîsa by means of a ladder.

(*Cunningham*, "*Bharhut*," pl. 17.)

FIG. 167.—RELIEFS FROM THE PILASTERS OF THE STÛPA OF BARHUT.

(Calcutta.)

[*See page* 306.]

of Greek myths, at least of those reflected in art, could not claim to possess any ethical value. What moral could be deduced from the love episodes of Zeus or Aphrodite? Despite all the efforts of literature and art to select myths which contained some moral meaning, the original character of Greek mythology remained unchanged. But the sudden appearance of morality in Greek civilization may be attributed to reaction against the immorality of the myths. Such was the end of the tragedy which ascribed all things to the tyranny of fate.

But the moral element which, on the whole, was lacking in Greek religion occupied a prominent position in the art of the two new creeds, Buddhism and Christianity. Buddhist art (we shall deal with that of Christianity in a later chapter) once it had concentrated on the representation of the life of Buddha, and thus gave up the attempt to act on nature through votive offerings and idols, had perforce to act on man, and to achieve this purpose became not only commemorative but, above all, didactic. It necessarily selected from the incarnations of Buddha the episodes best calculated to serve this moral purpose, and in the last incarnation it gave preference to the actions which led to the revelation.

Thus the date, forms and character of Buddhist art furnish proof of its Greek origin, which also accounts for certain of its distinctive features. There must have been a struggle with the tendency towards the symbolic representation of Buddha.

Symbolism in Buddhist Art.

Whilst in the art of the Gândhâra school the scenes concerning the incarnations of Buddha represent the reformer as a real figure (Fig. 166), in the art of Middle India Buddha in these same scenes is represented by a symbol. A historical and narrative art which depicts nothing but the life of a single individual, and from those scenes banishes the individual to whom it owes its existence, an art which subjects itself to this ruthless self-mutilation exhibits remarkable inconsistency.

But this inconsistency is explained by the natural aversion from figured forms underlying the spirit of the Buddhist doctrines. Contact with the civilization and art of Greece had led the Gândhâra Buddhists to conceal this aversion, for they saw in art a powerful means of propaganda and represented Buddha under his real aspect, which Asoka in his monuments had not yet dared to do. But to the Buddhists of Northern India, the cradle of the creed, such historical narrative representation must have appeared in the light of a crime against the purity of the doctrine; to assign a definite form to the figure of one who had denied the absolute value of all forms in the sphere of phenomena must have seemed the greatest insult to the spirit of his teaching. But the help offered by this art was too powerful to be despised, and the Buddhism of Middle India hoped to preserve its orthodoxy by permitting figured representation of the life of Buddha, but banishing the figure of the founder himself. For this reason the sculptured forms of Buddha-Gayâ, Barhut (Fig. 167), and Sâñtshî appear headless. But Buddhists had hoped in vain thus to preserve the anti-image tendency; the thin end of the wedge had been inserted, and shortly afterwards they were forced to admit the figure of Buddha, and, moreover, under the classical aspect of the Gândhâra school. The sculpture of Amarâvatî (Fig. 168) illustrates the final stage of this last concession. The paintings of Ajantâ (Fig. 169), executed a few centuries later, show how the tradition, by that time firmly established, had been maintained.

This struggle would never have taken place if Buddhist art had been the spontaneous product of religious conception, for it would either have avoided dealing with the incarnations of Buddha or it would have permitted representation of his figure. The similar phenomenon presented by some specimens of Mohammedan art, which represent the deeds of sacred persons, but substitute ciphers for the faces of these individuals, affords further proof of the difficulties with which only

FIG. 168.—ADORATION OF THE BUDDHA.

Relief of the Stûpa of Amarâvati. (British Museum.)

(*Fergusson*, "*Tree and Serpent Worship*," pl. 77.)

[*See page* 306.]

To face p. 306.

FIG. 169.—GAUTAMA TEMPTED BY THE HOST OF MÀRA.

Fresco from a cave temple (Ajantâ).

(*Griffiths*, "*Ajantâ*," i., pl. 8.)

[See page 396.]

the religions that received their art from an alien civilization had to contend.

Another characteristic of Buddhist art which the study of its origin throws into relief is the position which it accorded to idols. Buddhist art, which from the history of its development appears pre-eminently inclined towards iconolatry (we shall proceed to examine the causes which led it to take this direction) was at the outset merely decorative and did not create idols.* The simulacrum of the cult must be sought at the goal at which this art arrived, not at the place whence it started. Thus it seems to have travelled in the opposite direction to the arts of all other peoples. Art in the service of a religion is born for the purpose of protecting the whole nation or individual members of it; its first care is therefore to create idols and votive offerings. Even Greek art, which in the course of time came to emphasize its commemorative and decorative functions, began with idols and votive offerings, and clung to them even when most triumphant in the domain of mythical representation.

Development of Buddhist Art in the direction of Iconolatry.

But it is useless to sin against the intrinsic spirit of every creed, the utilitarian conception of the universe, and against the character which art must necessarily derive from it. If any art in the service of a religion desires to remain a religious art, if it does not wish to decline into an æsthetic practice, it cannot hope to evade one of its postulates—the protection of the faithful. It is possible that of its own accord Buddhism would never have arrived at the creation of a figured art, but once this art had come into existence, the people claimed from it what every nation claims from its own religious art, viz., protection. As long as Buddhist art remained in direct contact with Greek civilization, although beset by difficulties on all sides, it preserved its original character of a historical narrative art. But when the civilization of the Græco-Bactrian kingdom

* A. Grünwedel, *Buddhistische Kunst in Indien*, Berlin, 1900, p. 1 f., 30.

was trampled underfoot by the Indo-Scythians, when the kingdom of the Parthians, constantly at war with Rome, formed a barrier which checked the flow of Western civilization towards India, then Buddhist art, for ever cut off from its native stock, began to pursue a course which at first sight looks like involution, but which, as we cannot fail to realize, was natural progress towards the inevitable goal of every religious art. It is the triumph of iconolatry. The art which had attempted to banish Bodhisattva and Buddha from the scenes of their incarnations ended by placing these figures in the foreground. Moreover, the figures assume the position of face which indicates the closest possible connection with the worshipper; they become idols in scenes where they should have been merely beings alive and active.

Whilst this historical narrative art, thus departing from its original character, was degenerating, whilst it was losing its decorative element, the idols of the cult, the images which it had not at first possessed, multiplied indefinitely. Thus Buddhist art exhausted itself in the exclusive creation of idols and arrived at the stage of absorption in magic which had stifled Egyptian art. The creation of the images, the framing of exact regulations as to their size, movements and attributes, their revival by means of a relic—in short, all the details which a pettifogging priesthood deemed indispensable for their working—find a parallel in the similar functions and preoccupations of the Egyptian religious art.

Progress in this direction was at the same time harmful and beneficial to Buddhist art. It was beneficial inasmuch as it enabled it to penetrate throughout Asia. By way of the great commercial routes of Chinese Turkestan it entered China, Korea, and thence Japan. If Buddhism had relied for propaganda on its sacred books alone, it would probably have covered less ground. It promised to deliver people from the evils of life by placing before them scenes from the life of Buddha, but the people valued most the protection afforded by the possession

of his image. This iconolatry facilitated the triumph of Buddhism. The districts which it conquered in the Far East have not been sufficiently excavated to enable us to state whether a religious art had been widely diffused there. In China we only know of the funeral reliefs of Shantung, more especially the two groups of Hiao-t'ang-shan and U-tshe-shan.* They belong to the first half of the second century B.C—that is to say, to a time when Buddhism, with its complete equipment of idols and religious paintings, had made its official entrance into China, and it is possible to trace the influence of Buddhism on the form and design of these reliefs and in the commemorative character of the scenes. In any case, even if, before Buddhism entered China, this country possessed a religious art treating of history and mythology, Buddhism could not have experienced any difficulty in supplanting the indigenous art, seeing that it had command of images which had reached an advanced stage of development and, moreover, possessed a high protective power.

But the direction taken by Buddhist art was also harmful to the creed, because after having enabled it to conquer the whole of Asia, it caused it to lose almost all its new dominions, and in India led to the victory of Neo-Brahmanism or Hinduism. In fact, plastic art changed the nature of the Buddhist doctrines. Buddhism had shown itself superior to Brahmanism, inasmuch as it had supplied a more comforting solution to the painful problem of human animism. This solution consisted chiefly in the negation of the value of existence and in the attempt to detach man from his love of life. But the plastic art which had subsequently entered the service of Buddhism, originally as a narrative and decorative art alone, had finally developed into a protective art. To seek for help from idols constituted a fresh attachment to the existence which Buddhism, on the other hand, had attempted to destroy.

* E. Chavannes, *La Sculpture sur Pierre en Chine*, Paris, 1893 ; St. W. Bushell, *Chinese Art*, London, 1904.

Thus Buddhism was no longer superior to Brahmanism, for the help solicited from Buddha could also be solicited from the ancient gods. It is not improbable that, when Buddhist art turned from narration to iconolatry, it was chiefly out of consideration for the uneducated section of the people, who, consciously or unconsciously, must have clung more tenaciously to the old Brahmanic conception. In any case, there is no doubt that Buddhist art resigned all its inheritance of religious figures to Brahmanic art, which means that the transition from one creed to the other, or, more accurately, the renaissance of the old creed, took place under the auspices of art. If Buddhist art had not reached the stage of image-worship, but remained faithful to its original narrative and moral character, it would not have lost its individuality or supplied Neo-Brahmanism with a weapon so powerful that the latter gained the victory and completely ousted the former.

Absence of a Funerary Art.

On comparing this chapter with those devoted to the other religions, it will be observed that hitherto we have confined ourselves to Buddhist art in connection with man's life on earth, and that no mention has been made of a funeral art. This is because there never existed an independent Buddhist funeral art with a distinctive patrimony of figures and scenes. This fact can be explained by the Buddhist religious conception. A religion which aimed at stamping out the love of life and therefore looked upon death as a means of deliverance from all evils, a religion which had no desire to prolong life beyond the confines of death, if it contained elements abhorrent to art for the protection of life, would certainly not feel the need of art for the next world. Although contact with Greek civilization had imposed on this religion a historical narrative art, it could not succeed in imposing on it a funeral art. There was no material for its subject-matter. Thus, although the stûpa, the most characteristic monument of this art, had, in the first

place, a funeral object, none of its decorative scenes and figures recalled in later times its original character. Moreover, the very direction taken by Buddhist art, historical and narrative, must have contributed to this aversion from funerary art. It is an undisputed fact that when a religion turns to representation of the past history of gods and heroes it at the same time lessens the interest in the life to come and reduces the material for a funerary art. To sum up, funerary art occupies a prominent place in Egyptian civilization, a much less important position in that of Greece, is entirely absent from Buddhist art, and plays a very small part in that of Christianity. And this because the historical and narrative character of a religious art is the reflection of its spiritualism; in other words, of the comparative unimportance of the material preservation of the individual in the future.

Form in Buddhist Art and its derivatives.

As in the case of the other arts, we must proceed to examine the influence exercised by the religious conception over the treatment of form. In order to understand this treatment throughout the whole course of Buddhist art, and also to explain the peculiar aspect assumed by the arts derived from it—viz., Chinese, Korean, Japanese and indirectly Persian—we must lay stress on the fact that Buddhist art took its form from that of Greece.

Now, by the time that Greek art came into contact with Buddhism, it had mastered the real and illusive methods of representing the oblique in the forms. In statuary it had learnt how to represent figures in all the inclined and contorted postures which the human frame can assume, and it had also created united groups consisting of two or more figures closely intertwined by the interlocking of limbs. In relief, by the adaptation of schemes to greater or less projection, Greek art had similarly introduced figures in oblique positions and groups intertwined, figures which were superposed

or stood behind the others on the plane. In painting, by means of light and shade, foreshortening and perspective, Greek art rendered illusively what it represented in bodily form in relief and statuary; it had by this time arrived at complete mastery over the representation of figures in space.

These methods of representing forms in the oblique had enabled Greek art to satisfy one of the requirements of the work of art, one which had, however, presented insurmountable difficulties to arts working on parallel schemes—viz., agreement between the development of the action, or the relations of the figures between themselves, and the purpose of the scene to be contemplated, that is to say, its connection with the spectator. In fact, statuary, relief and painting could, by means of the oblique schemes, represent figures in action, but arranged in such a way that, to the spectator, the action seemed to be accomplished for himself.

But if these tools are put into the hands of artists not trained to use them, who therefore handle them clumsily, instead of an attempt to depict nature under her real aspect by the constant study of nature herself, the result will be a schematic and conventional art. This was what happened in the case of Buddhist art; what is looked upon as the peculiar conventionalism of Indian art, and of the art of the Far East, is the natural consequence of this original condition, of the contact between a new religion and an art in an advanced state of development.

Buddhist art first began as a decorative art on monuments, and devoted itself especially to relief and painting. The oblique representation of human figures, real or almost real in relief, illusive in painting, constitutes an act of violence on the part of art against the material on which it works, the block of stone hewn, or the plane whereon lines are traced. When artists allow themselves to be carried away by the force of their material, schemes present themselves insidiously, with an increasing tendency to become parallel.

Thus, in its first and best products, Buddhist art presents oblique schemes in no way inferior to the works of pure Greek art. But in course of time, when the period of contact between Buddhist art and Greek civilization had become past history, in Central India, we observe an ever-growing tendency to return to parallel schemes.

In fact, in relief, isolated figures are inclined to abandon the oblique in favour of the profile or full-face position, and groups of figures separate into rows, parallel, horizontal or vertical.

In painting, in all the three illusive methods of representation — linear foreshortening, chiaroscuro and perspective—one perceives a similar confusion due to the tendency towards parallelism. This tendency gave rise to the special schemes of lineal foreshortening which, particularly for the head, are so characteristic of all the art of India, Persia, and the Far East. It gave rise to the faded, indistinct appearance of the chiaroscuro ; it gave rise to the peculiar perspective which makes the spectator feel that he is contemplating objects and buildings from a very great height, or, more correctly, the objects and buildings seem to rise up before him.

Christian art at first shared a similar fate ; it also inherited from Greek art the real and illusive methods of representing the oblique, and it also showed inability to make use of them. It also displayed, equally with Buddhist art, a tendency towards iconolatry. But Christian art passed successfully through this period of transition, discovered how to make good use of all these illusive methods, and, indeed, obtained from them results which Greek art had not been able to produce, because Christianity possessed something that Buddhism lacked, the profound transformation of the religious spirit which we call the Renaissance. The Renaissance melted the rigid Christian conception which had been gradually crystallizing throughout the Middle Ages. It tried to give pre-

eminence to the human and narrative side and to reduce the protective element in the work of the divinity, and it illustrated all this in its plastic art. The religious scene was only interesting for its subject-matter in so far as it could assert itself through form, and art returned to, studied and perfected the methods of representation, foreshortening, chiaroscuro and perspective, which up to that time it had borne in its train without obtaining from them adequate results. Christian art was able to develop in this manner because no other religion was undermining its foundations. But Buddhist art was less fortunate. About the seventh century A.D., Buddhism began to decay in India and was ultimately ousted by Hinduism. In the districts where it continued to exist, or rather to advance towards a humanistic transformation similar to the change worked by the Renaissance on Christianity, its progress was impeded and involution took place. Buddhist art remained faithful to tradition and its artists did not feel themselves called upon to trouble about form when the religious conception did not furnish a direct inspiration to it. The schools of art which, in these Eastern lands, especially Japan, changed their form and colouring, treated of profane themes. On the other hand, Christianity pursued the same course as Greek civilization, for it sought for and discovered forms perfectly adapted to its religious art.

Buddhist Architecture.

While Buddhism owes to Greek civilization the forms and attitudes of plastic art, it owes little in the case of architecture. It is certainly said that only under the ruler Asoka did Indian architecture substitute stone for wood, and this is due rather to contact with Greece than to Persian influence. Even in the monuments of Kashmir a special type of Græco-Doric column was long preserved, and besides the material and the Doric column we can trace Greek influence in certain other structural and decorative elements. Some architectural details of no less importance

have been borrowed from Persian art, but neither Persia nor Greece have introduced their religious monuments into India. The fact that the Greek temple was not introduced into India is explained if we remember that the temple was the house of the image and that Buddhism, which has inherited these characteristics from Brahmanism, originally possessed no idols.

Buddhism accepted and preserved the ancient type of the religious monuments of Brahmanism. And this was natural, for Buddhism and Brahmanism stood on the same plane as regards the valuation of life and were two solutions of the same problem of universal animism. As Brahmanism had no religious art of figure representation, it had no buildings in honour of the gods. It had only a funerary edifice, the tumulus. And this was kept and passed on to Buddhism, which converted it into a religious structure, the stûpa. This conversion was simple. At the death of Buddha his bones and relics were divided among the States and the princes, and each portion was preserved in a funerary monument—a stûpa; and when the veneration of the faithful had been for centuries concentrated upon these monuments they came to be held as sacred, and this type of monument was henceforth erected not only for the reception of a relic, but also to record some great event in the life of Buddha or simply in his honour. To the same commemorative spirit were due the "stambhas" or columns surmounted by a sacred symbol. But if Buddhism had received from Brahmanism the type of the stûpa with its wooden enclosing fence in the form of a balustrade, it owes to Greek civilization not only the transformation of the building and the balustrade into stone, but also its decoration. And as this decoration could not be applied to the body of the stûpa on account of its cupola form, in Gândhâra it was often arranged upon a base with squared panels, after the fashion of metopes, while in India it was applied to the cornice and pilasters of the balustrade and specially upon the gates. The sculptures of Barhut, Sâñtshî and Amarâvatî are

in fact from the balustrades. And so, while the stûpa reveals its magical character by its form of an inaccessible reliquary, these sculptures show the Greek character of their decoration by their arrangement on the exterior of the structure.

Another form of religious building, the "tshaitya," like the stûpa owes its origin to the funerary cult. Though in progress of time this word indicated a place of meeting for the faithful the tshaitya was only an adjunct to the sepulchre, or rather to the building containing the sepulchre. We perceive this funerary origin also in the cave temples which with the lapse of centuries have acquired such gigantic proportions in India. We may therefore assume that on the whole, though the funeral conception has suggested no subject to plastic art, architecture has drawn its principal elements from funerary art. And the reason is clear: the culmination of the Buddhist religion consists in the death of Buddha and his entrance into Nirvâna. Before plastic art, stimulated by Greece, came forward to represent the life of Buddha so that the teaching of his doctrines should emanate from every image, the cult of his memory was chiefly carried on round the buildings which contained his relics. And if the stûpa with its too apparent character of a funeral monument became decadent with Buddhism, the cave temples and edifices which had arisen round these first funerary nuclei became the inheritance of Hinduism. One remarkable coincidence among the many which make Christianity and Buddhism appear so closely related is that Christian architecture is also of funerary origin. It arises with the catacombs and cemeteries from the cult of the martyrs and leaves the sign of this origin upon the later religious buildings with the crypt and the tombs.

And in another building the architecture of these two creeds has been determined by the requirements of each. Men were collected in battalions to fight for the faith, preaching the love of all mankind and the renunciation of earthly life. And so

religious communities arose; the one creed with its "vihâras," the other with its convents, created a new type of religious edifice which had never before appeared in the history of human civilization. In Egypt every man had striven alone in a spirit of egotism to obtain his own happiness in the life beyond the grave, but in Buddhism and Christianity men joined hands in brotherly love to attain to this same object.

Throughout Indian and Buddhist literature we may seek in vain for the close connection between art and literature which we have revealed in the chapters on other religions. In India, art and literature have a different origin, the former being borrowed by Buddhism from Greek civilization whilst the latter is a pre-eminently indigenous product. But Indian and Buddhist literature furnish a clear explanation of the reason why India adopted a form of plastic art which was, at the same time, historical and narrative. When Buddhist art came into being, the literature of the country had taken a historical impress, not to be found in the earliest literary monuments, for the Vedas are collections of hymns and prayers forming a ritual of sacrifices, of which the chief element is the help expected from the gods. Herein magic functions occupy an important place. The same tone prevails in the commentaries on the Vedic hymns. But, in proportion as Buddhism gains in strength, the historical narrative element becomes more marked in the literature. This is, in fact, the period when the two great epic poems were written, legends collected and the Buddhist books composed, from the Jâtakas, dealing with the previous lives of Buddha, down to the books that related the last incarnation of Bodhisattva, who was on the way to become Buddha.

Indian and Buddhist Literature.

But Buddhist literature also reflects the state of mind which, in art, had led to the worship of images. The people

live chiefly in the present and future, every appeal to the past acts as a check on the natural development of their thoughts. Buddhism had taken too historical an impress. The remembrance of Buddha could not suffice to content all the people who came after the generation which had known him in the flesh. They buoyed themselves up with the hope of a new Buddha, the final incarnation, just as the Christians hoped for, and feared, the coming of the millennium. The northern school was especially preoccupied with the expectation of Maitrêya, the new Buddha.

This need on the part of the people for the present and future protection of Buddha explains the peculiar aspect which Buddhism assumed in Tibet, viz., Lamaism, also the character of Tibetan literature. The popular longing for divine help could not be appeased by the expectation of a future Buddha, it could only be satisfied by the belief in a Buddha always present and for ever reappearing in the two Lamas. Just because Lamaism assumed this form it possesses a force and a vitality which pure Buddhism came to lack. In fact, Buddhism fell into decay in India owing to the influence of Hinduism, inasmuch as the latter offered some of the characteristics of Lamaism and reduced the historical element of the religion in favour of the protective power.

This change is, naturally, reflected in the later literature, which thus presents a phenomenon similar to that of the figured art, viz., a gradual tendency towards image-worship, in other words, the obsession of the need for divine assistance.

X

CHRISTIANITY

Christianity as a funerary religion—Cult images—Symbolic and allegorical art—Subjects of cemetery paintings—Composition and form in the cemetery paintings—Subjects, composition and forms in the sarcophagi—Didactic and exemplary art—Subjects and forms in exemplary art—Iconolatrous art—Course of iconolatrous art—Persistence of historical subjects—The religious renaissance—Narrative art—Subjects of narrative art—Character of the subjects in narrative art—Statuary, relief and painting in narrative art—Spiritual expression in narrative art—Cult images in narrative art—Christian architecture—Christian literature.

Christianity as a Funerary Religion.

Roman religion possessed no sense of death and therefore no funerary conception which could promise man a recompense for his weary life on earth. And the funerary conception of the Greeks, which by its nature could offer little hope of happiness to the believer, had continually become poorer beneath the corroding influence of philosophy. The cultured upper classes, pervaded by the spirit of Lucian, derided the gods and especially the gods of the infernal regions, and no longer believed either in the obscure torments of Erebus or in the colourless joys of Elysium. But the people, who were neither philosophers nor sceptics, could not renounce the hope of the life beyond the grave which shone before them as a recompense for all their unsatisfied hopes on earth. And thus under the civilization of the Empire, when the ancient Greek and Roman religions no longer moved the people or eased their troubles and Stoic

philosophy offered a refuge only to a few elect spirits, the infiltration of Oriental cults began.

The cult of Isis and Horus came from Egypt, from Asia Minor came the worship of Attis and Cybele, from Syria came the cult of Atargatis and from Persia that of Mithra. All these cults held out to their converts a hope that was no longer offered by the official religions—that of a future life better than their present one. They were all religions whose nucleus was found in the funerary conception. Founded nearly always upon the principle of a death and a resurrection, this life was considered only as a preparation and a passing on to the joys of the world to come.

Among these new religions was one which succeeded in making proselytes in the pagan world though it seemed to be imprisoned in the bonds of its own nationality and had never concerned itself about a future life—the Hebrew religion. This religion possessed something equivalent to the hope of a life beyond the grave: it had the Messianic prophecy. Hebrew Messianism had changed its character with the political changes which impelled many Hebrews to leave their country and seek an abiding-place in the Hellenistic cities on the coasts of the Mediterranean. Their Messianism was originally a political question, it was the expectation of a national liberator who would recompense the people for the grievous slavery which they had endured for centuries. Now that the Hebrew nation had come forth from this period of slavery and that its sons were spontaneously seeking for a new home in fresh countries, the originally political character of Messianism became obscured in the minds of the people: the Messiah had become in a vague sense of the word a liberator, who was one day to appear suddenly on earth and would help and recompense this ever-restless and dissatisfied people. Messianism remained an earthly hope but was no longer a national one, and for this reason it could be approached by proselytes, it could

offer them something similar to that promised by other Oriental cults.

But a new religion detached itself from the stock of Hebrew religion—a new religion which maintained the fundamental idea of Messianism, but transformed it from an earthly to a heavenly one, and presented it as having been already established for the liberation of men, and founded the doctrine upon the firm basis of a new morality. This religion is Christianity.

God became man, came down to earth and revealed His divine character by His works, had taken upon Him the sins of men and showed by the last act of redemption—His death—that His kingdom was not of this world but was the kingdom of heaven. The Messianic prophecy had proved itself true, but the Messiah did not reveal Himself as in the original tenets of the Hebrews, as the Saviour of the men living at the time of His coming, and as the deliverer of one people only, but had promised salvation to all mankind, present and future, and had indicated the kingdom of rewards as existing beyond the limits of this world.

If Christianity had thus completely detached itself from Hebraism, it joined issues with other Oriental religions which in the same way regarded earthly life as a transition to the joys of the future life. But Christianity, because it had come from the bosom of Hebraism, which had always given great weight to morality, boasted of one feature which was superior to all these other religions, the obligation of moral actions in order to obtain a reward in the life to come. Charity, love for mankind, this is the fulcrum of Christian morality. Only the man who has loved his fellow-men, alleviated their misfortunes and soothed their sorrows can hope for a recompense from God. This principle existed in embryo in other religions and when limited to the members of their own nation was also one of the chief points of Hebrew morality, when extended to all humanity it was the glorious characteristic of Christianity alone.

And here we must note how unjustly the doctrine of Buddhist charity has been compared to that of Christian charity. Buddhist charity was a pretext for withdrawing oneself from our attachment to life, it was only an apparent renunciation of self, for it was an attempt at indulging a far greater degree of selfishness by freedom from the terrible animistic cycle of life. Christian charity on the other hand was a means of obtaining a better life beyond the barriers of death and was a spiritualization of present and future life. Buddhist charity came from the obscure mass of animism and was the negation of life, Christian charity shone on the summit of monotheism and maintained the truth of life even after death.

A creed such as the Christian religion, which promised a better life and pointed out the way to reach it, not as in other Oriental cults by mechanical ritual practices but by modest daily works of love and charity, must necessarily reveal its superiority to other religions and especially to the indifferentism of the official religion of the Empire. It was bound to gain ground in one direction and break down barriers in another, and finally to become the religion of all the sorrow-laden men who examined it, of all who could not adapt themselves to the idea of an absolute end to life and of all who inquired into its mysteries with fear and hope.

We have made it clear that the Christian religion was essentially a funerary religion, a religion whose sole aim was the life beyond the grave. Everything was subordinate to this and there was a return of that preoccupation which had been so oppressive in the Egyptian religion, but had been reduced to a minimum in the religions of Greece and Rome. It returned indeed, but with a difference. The Egyptian, deeply attached as he was to his temporal property, looked with terror on the end of life and hoped for a future life similar to that which he had led in this world. For the Christian on the other hand the life beyond the grave was

to be very different: he was to live again in spirit only and therefore all the material needs of the body would be annulled, and as the future life was to be happier than the past life the latter was reduced to a time of preparation for the better life. By his works the believer would conquer the reward of the life beyond the tomb.

Nor was this principle that the good or evil done on earth is the cause of rewards and penalties in the future life new in religion. We might even say that it is not absent from any funerary conception, even of the simplest and rudest among the uncivilized races, for it is only a continuation into the future life of the exercise of justice, without which life with others is impossible. It is not absent in Egyptian religion, where the judgment of Osiris separates the good from the bad. It is not absent from the religion of Greece, where in the Nekyia, however, the great penalties are reserved for mythical delinquents and rewards and penalties either do not exist or are a secondary feature for other men. But no religion has carried to such an extreme as the Christian one the idea of representing life on earth as a place of trial where the rewards and punishment awaiting us in the future life must be earned. Behind every human action was the moral sanction of the divinity and therefore every action in life hastened to an end which was beyond life itself.

It is worthy of note that this creed which was founded upon the funerary conception, and upon the fears and hopes of the life beyond the tomb, only uses vague and indeterminate expressions about this life. We must not think of the colossal poetical creation of Dante which really filled a lacuna in the Christian religion, we must not refer to mediæval visions, but must go back to the earliest canonical and apocryphal works, especially the former, to see how indefinite was the idea of life beyond the grave. We find something more definite only in the Apocalypse of S. Peter, an apocryphal work. This want of definition is partly due to the spiritual character of

the conception; the joys of the triumphant soul could not be described so clearly as, for example, the satisfaction of the needs of the body in Egyptian religion. This characteristic was also partly inherited from the Semitic ancestry, for Hebrew religion had no thought for the details of a future life, and it was in some measure due to Greek influence, which had imagined the life of Erebus and the Elysian Fields as colourless, but above all it was owing to the general spirit of the civilization of the time. This civilization was, through Greek influence, strongly persuaded that the natural has firmly established characteristics and that the supernatural, when firmly established, may be characterized by fabulous inconsistency, so that it might be led to draw a picture of the life beyond the grave similar perhaps to that of Egyptian religion. Humanity desired to hope, desired that all should not come to an end with death, but was reluctant to give concrete form to this hope, because it feared to pass the bounds of reality, to enter the field of imagination and to remove the foundation of its hopes.

Hence if the Christian religion again confirms in civilization the sense of the future which Greek religion had reduced to a minimum, it stops before the doors of the unknowable and thus shows itself at the height of the civilization of its time.

Cult Images.

It was necessary to bring to light these characteristics of the Christian religion in order to understand what kind of works of art it could inspire. Having originated in the bosom of Hebraism, which absolutely prohibited the use of images, it must have felt an instinctive repulsion for figure representations. But having to seek its proselytes in the Græco-Roman world, which could conceive no religion without the help of art and which had introduced the use of images even into those Eastern cults which had never needed them on their own account, Christianity could not avoid this suggestion and accepted the help of art all

the more willingly that it perceived what a powerful means for the diffusion of its principles it would have in plastic art.

This difference determined the nature and course of primitive Christian art. It has been much discussed and the problem is still unsolved, whether the origins of Christian art are to be sought in the East or in the West. This inquiry is relatively important in connection with the forms in the art of figure representation when it is observed that, whether it was in the East or in the West, this art arose in the midst of Græco-Christian communities and that it is fundamentally Greek in character. It must not be forgotten that Christianity was in the beginning a Semitic phenomenon which had passed through the Greek crucible. In the East or in the West the disagreement we find in the Christian communities was between the Semitic spirit and the Greek spirit, the "Ecclesia ex circumcisione" and the "Ecclesia ex gentibus" and not between the Greek and the Roman spirit. Christianity made its first proselytes in the midst of the Judæo-Hellenic communities, of which the communities in Rome were only offshoots. And when proselytism went beyond the Semitic circle it continued among the Orientals and Romans with Greek tendencies. The Greek spirit remained the intermediary through which the Semitic doctrines of Christianity were able to touch the heart and intellect of the Western races. Then when Christianity began to direct attack on the Western peoples, not so much because of their place of habitation as on account of their origin, the Greek spirit of their doctrines was consolidated and firmly impressed itself upon the language and contents of the sacred writings.

Primitive Christian art then, both in the East and the West, is an art in which the Semitic and the Greek elements are in opposition. The genuine Roman element does not come into the question, especially as Roman art was derived from Greek art and the men who actually executed the Roman works of art under the Empire were for the most part either Greeks or

Grecized Orientals. The victory of the Greek element over the Semitic was only obtained after a long and bitter war. The Semitic element was strongly opposed to a material representation of the divinity. If the words of the Old Testament had an equal value with those of the Gospel and Christianity had in fact brought to light from the Bible the prophecies which had announced the coming of Christ, thus proving its truth, the Christians could not go against the prohibition which thunders so solemnly through its pages.

This is the reason of the absence of idols in primitive Christian art. That residue of magic preserved in the use of the image by Greek art, which had, however, always asserted the mythical and historical character of its religion, disappears from Christian art. We find a similar phenomenon in Buddhist art, for the idol arose late on in its course. But Buddhism was not able to resist that inclination instinctive in man when once art has been placed at the service of his religious conception—prayer to the image for protection, and thence the creation of the idol. The Buddhist religion ended by becoming devoted to image-worship. Christianity also created the cult image in time and by this passion determined the course of a whole period of its existence. But if the Christian cult image assumed characteristics which kept it far from the true idol, this was due to the inheritance of Semitism which has never ceased to weigh it down.

The Christian cult image was in fact generally, and especially in primitive times, a work of painting, not of sculpture, and thus the peculiar nature of the idol—its corporality—was abolished. In painting the corporality of the image was no longer real but illusive. The magical force which all religions attributed to the idol and its identification with the divinity itself, to whom the mind is attracted by the corporality of the statue, disappears from the Christian image. Even Greek art, which had so greatly contributed to destroy the magic power of religious images, had not been able to take this step.

And the Christian image is generally not only a work of painting, but, outside the period during which a passion for image-worship triumphed, it never represents the divinity as inert, *i.e.*, in an attitude of protection towards the worshipper, but always represents him as occupied in some action of the past. Whether Jesus as an infant is held in His mother's arms or He hangs dying upon the cross, art has fixed upon a determinate action of the divine life, an action which has saved humanity but which has taken place in the past. The action of the divinity doubtless protects the worshipper, not exactly by magical power emanating from the figure, but by an educative force which continues its work up to the present moment so that it should still have the power of calling men into the right way as pointed out by the Lord.

The sacred image has thus altered its field of action. Instead of acting upon nature and upon the gods like the idols of other peoples, it acts upon men, not with a present action but by appealing to the past. Greek art was not capable of this. It had succeeded in taking from the mythical scenes figures of the divinity in action, such as Zeus the Thunderer or the Athene Promachos, but it would have been difficult for these images to take the place of the idols, which should by tradition be inert and in any case had no force of example ; they were commemorative and decorative figures only.

After what we have said I need hardly recall the fact that at certain periods of the history of Christianity the cult images have been and still are in certain classes of society credited with powers equal to those attributed to idols in early religions. Ideas which a superior civilization has left behind have reappeared from the substratum of human knowledge. We must notice that not a few stormy vicissitudes have developed in connection with the cult of images in the history of Christianity.

The contests of the Iconoclasts, or the Iconomachs, which broke out with violence in the eighth century under Leo III

the Isaurian and his successors and lasted through the whole of the ninth century, resulted from a latent aversion to images which crept in through the Græco-Oriental communities and was kept alive by the traditional Semitic spirit. It is taking too small a view of the matter to attribute these troubles to monastic hatreds and money disagreements. The aversion of the Iconoclasts to images originated in the character assumed by Christian art especially in the East from the sixth century, a character which we may justly term iconolatrous. But this struggle was a struggle of few against many and was developed in those Greek lands in which the cult of images was strongly rooted as it went back to classical civilization. For this reason the struggle failed. The opposition of the people, who would not give up the hope and comfort which they drew from the cult of images, suppressed the Iconoclasts more surely than their condemnation by the second Council of Nicea (787) and the Council of Constantinople (842) or the civil war which broke out in the first half of the ninth century.

We find proof of this attachment of the Græco-Oriental mind to the cult of images in the fact that the Græco-Oriental religion has preserved more tenaciously than the rest the iconolatrous character of its art and is the only one that still preserves it at the present day. While Christian art in Italy, France, the Rhenish School and Flanders of the thirteenth century released their forms from the Byzantine rigidity and made for the Renaissance, the art of the Greek Orthodox Church remained firm in its ancient conventions and even at the present day a Russian icon is a testimony of the arrest of forms determined by the influence of the cult of images.

But the struggle that failed in the East was taken up in the West by the Vaudois, Albigenses, Wickliffites, Hussites, Lutherans, Calvinists, the followers of all those doctrines in which either consciously or unconsciously the Old Testament

spirit with its prohibition of image-worship is opposed to the evangelical spirit. The war of the Reformation was in effect fought in the name of the Bible, and here the opposers of image-worship carried off the victory which they could not obtain in the East. In the East the Iconoclasts were opposed by the spirit of a people traditionally accustomed for centuries to the cult of images, while in the West the work of the Reformation was favoured by a population who had by tradition no need of this cult. The Reformation was victorious in those Germanic countries where no tradition of figure representation in art existed, those countries in which the original religion before the Græco-Roman influence had no cult of images and where the Christian religion had been unable to establish this cult firmly in the minds of the people. The barriers of the Rhine and the Alps closed the way to the Reformation, for beyond them lived an inexhaustible tradition of art whose roots were deep down in classical soil or were fed by the spirit of Christianity.

If the Council of Trent in its decree "De invocatione, veneratione et reliquiis sanctorum et sacris imaginibus" of its twenty-fifth session felt it necessary to explain what the cult of images meant to Christianity and throw light on its value as a means of example, we must recognize that this value had already been fully shown by the whole course of Christian art with relation to other religions. The wars of the Reformation were fought against the aberrations of the popular spirit and had no reasonable standpoint against the spirit of the Church. S. Paulinus of Nola, S. Nilus and S. Gregory the Great had already recognized in Christian art the value of example alone and had left to art the task of teaching those who could not read the Holy Scriptures the good actions performed by men devoted to God.* And Dante had defended the Church in connection

* A. Venturi, *Storia dell' Arte Italiana*, Milano, 1901, i., p. 201 f.

with its sacred representations in material form when he made Beatrice say (*Par.*, iv. 43–48):

> "Per questo la Scrittura condiscende
> A vostra facultate e piedi e mano
> Attribuisce a Dio ed altro intende;
> E Santa Chiesa con aspetto umano
> Gabriel e Michel vi rappresenta
> E l'altro che Tobia rifece sano."

Symbolic and Allegorical Art.

Since the Semitic spirit prevailing at the primitive period of Christianity allowed no representation of the deity, how could plastic art enter the confines of the new religion? The Christian religion was essentially a funerary religion and centred round the cult of the dead, preparing for them in the subterranean cemeteries* resting-places where it was possible for the survivors to assemble in order to provide for the salvation of the souls of the dead and at the same time for that of their own souls, and therefore the Christians had in the sepulchres their first place of worship and of art. But if Semitic tradition prohibited the representation of images of the deity there was no absolute prohibition of decorative designs from plant and animal subjects. These motives formed the chief part of the decoration of the dwellings of the living and so the art of figure representation approached Christianity through the practice of decoration. Christianity accepted from Roman decorative art even the human figures of Cupids or allegorical heads which seemed to have lost their real nature by their close connection with floral and geometrical motives. Thus even the human figure was admitted by a side-path into primitive Christian art.

Henceforward art was fatally dragged downward. If an allegorical meaning belonging to another form of culture and having little significance to the minds of the faithful was

* G. Wilpert, *Le pitture delle catacombe romane*, Roma, 1903.

FIG. 170.—DANIEL, THE GOOD SHEPHERD, PRAYING AND ALLEGORICAL FIGURES.

(Cemetery of Lucina, Rome.)

(*Wilpert*, pl. 25.)

FIG. 171.—THE GOOD SHEPHERD, ADAM AND EVE, MOSES, JONAH AND PRAYING FIGURE.

(Cœmeterium Maius, Rome.)

(*Wilpert*, pl. 171.)

[*See page* 331.]

FIG. 172.—ADAM AND EVE, NOAH, MOSES.
Cemetery of SS. Peter and Marcellinus. (Rome.)
(*Wilpert*, pl. 186.)

FIG. 173.—MOSES, THE MAGI, THE PARALYTIC MAN, LAZARUS.
Cemetery of S. Domitilla. (Rome.)

accepted with these figures, why not introduce into the decoration other figures whose symbolical meaning could refer to the new religion and address itself to new believers? Such a concession would not cost the Semitic spirit much, for symbolism had a large share in Assyrio-Babylonian art and symbols are also found in the contemporary Jewish catacombs. The primitive symbolism of the Christians made use of the human figure, and this is the only difference which distinguishes it from Jewish symbolism, which was restricted to figures of plants, animals and religious accessories.

The first symbolical and allegorical subjects appear timidly n the midst of a superfluity of decorative motives in the paintings of cemeteries of the first and second centuries. Very small in size and lost among the vine tendrils and geometric designs, they seem to be trying to hide from the eyes of the profane or to be asking pardon for occupying the place where they have indiscreetly insinuated themselves (Fig. 170). The conditions are changed in the period from the third to the fourth century, for the Christian conception becomes more firmly established with regard to Semitism and Paganism and these human figures occupy a larger proportion of space, gradually diminishing that left to ornamental motives (Fig. 171).

In order to understand the path followed by Christian art we must now see in what subjects its symbolic and allegorical spirit appears. It is not always possible to comprehend the symbol or allegory in its entire subtilty, all the more so that it must have been somewhat vague in the minds of the earliest believers, as we see from the diversity of the interpretations given by writers of the Christian Church, but all the symbols and all the allegories, being intended for the ornamentation of sepulchres, call attention to the fate of the defunct, to the salvation of his soul, to the fundamental hope of the believer, and the

Subjects of Cemetery Paintings.

eternal recompense promised by the Lord to those who follow the way of love and justice.

The isolated figures of the dove, the sheep and the peacock are symbols of meekness and eternal life. The Good Shepherd, with the lamb on his shoulder or in the midst of his flock, symbolizes the protection given by God to His children (S. John x. 1 ff.). The praying figure indicates the value of prayer for the salvation of the soul. A baptism and the Eucharistic feast or the elements of the Eucharist will recall to the faithful the two sacraments necessary for entrance into the true religion.

But the principal group of symbolic and allegorical subjects in the cemetery paintings consists not of figures from real life but of scenes referring to the past, mythological or Biblical scenes.

There are few really mythological subjects: I only remember Cupid and Psyche and Orpheus taming the beasts by the sound of his lyre. The former found entrance into Christian art because the two figures had nothing specifically Pagan in them, and the second because Christ was supposed to be symbolized in Orpheus.

Far the most numerous are the Old Testament subjects (Fig. 172): the sin of Adam and Eve, Noah and the ark, the sacrifice of Abraham, Moses striking the rock to make the water flow forth, Balaam and the star, Job, Isaiah prophesying the birth of the Messiah from the Virgin, the three children in the furnace, Daniel in the lions' den, Susannah and the elders, Jonah and Tobias—these are the subjects most frequently repeated.

Less frequent are the scenes from the New Testament (Fig. 173). The offerings of the Magi, Christ and the woman of Samaria at the well, the healing of the leper, of the man stricken with the palsy, of the woman with the issue of blood, of the blind man, the multiplication of the loaves and the resurrection of Lazarus are the most common.

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Christianity

I omit the scenes, chiefly from the New Testament, of which the interpretation is doubtful, but in any case they cannot by the addition of a few new motives make any substantial change in the character of this cemetery decoration. It must be understood also that these subjects have not all appeared contemporaneously in art, nor have they been diffused to the same extent. Among the Old Testament subjects Noah, Moses, Daniel and Jonah are the most ancient and the most frequent; among the New Testament subjects Lazarus is the earliest and most often repeated. Noah in the ark symbolized either baptism or the salvation of the defunct from eternal death. Moses striking the rock symbolized baptism, the three children in the furnace and Daniel among the lions might refer to the liberation of the soul or the resurrection, Lazarus clearly pointed to the resurrection, and the Magi to the triumph of the Church in the midst of the Gentiles.

But leaving apart these particulars, which have more connection with the details than the essential, we have to inquire into the general nature of this art. Though modest in form, in spirit it reached the highest level of its time. Its appeal to scenes of the past is specially remarkable. Christianity, which appeared in the history of humanity as a funerary religion of hope for the future, did not attempt to break down the barriers of the unknowable. It has made no representation of a future life, unless a painting or two in the cemeteries can be with difficulty interpreted as a celestial feast or the place of the blessed souls in heaven. Christianity has celebrated the future and hoped in the future, while looking on the past. Freedom from the dangers which beset the soul on earth, resurrection and eternal peace, all this was desired and expected by the believer when he looked on it in the figures of Noah, Moses, Jonah and Lazarus.

Turning to the past, Christianity has removed from its primitive art that magical power which seemed indispensable

for an art which tended to assure the future of mankind. The cemetery paintings had not the scope of the Egyptian funerary paintings, that of constraining the divinity by the power of the image to concede to the defunct that which he needed in the life beyond the grave; they were intended to act upon the minds of the survivors and worshippers by revealing to them the divine omnipotence. As God had saved Noah and Isaac and Jonah and Lazarus, He would save the new believer. The picture aroused faith in salvation, it did not in itself perform the work of salvation. And in the choice of subjects Christian art did not actually aim at the prize of salvation, but at the way in which it might be obtained, the way of faith in the power of the Lord.

Christian art thus established from the beginning a principle to which it always adhered. For this religion which directed the eyes of men to the life beyond the tomb only has never given inspiration to art for subjects other than of the past. Yet when, later on, heaven is represented by it, it is not imagined as the dwelling-place of human persons, as was the case in Egyptian art with the fields of Aaru, or the celestial river or the subterranean river, but heaven is represented as a scene of the past, of the assumption or the coronation of the Virgin for instance, just as was done in Greek art with Hades populated with mythical personages. The heaven of Christian art also is an image of the past.

In its whole course Christian art has only treated one subject from the future, the Last Judgment, but this does not belong to its earlier productions and had no funerary function, nor, what is more important, was it a real representation of the future. In the scene of the Last Judgment there breathes a spirit like that of the prophetic writings of the Hebrews. They were history written beforehand, and the Last Judgment was a historical review made in the future. It is dominated also by the spirit of the past: by means of this spirit God separates the good from the bad, announces to

the former the joys of Paradise and to the latter the pains of Hell. But the preoccupation of the future stops at this announcement, for both rewards and penalties are outside the limits of the scene. From the earliest embryonal representations of Romanic and Gothic art to the great creation of Michelangelo in the Sistine Chapel, through all the series of analogous and similar subjects of the Triumph of Death in the Campo Santo of Pisa and the Triumph of Religion by Luca Signorelli in the Cathedral of Orvieto, the Judgment scene in art has always been ratified by the good or evil done in the past.

If we make clear the criterion by which primitive Christian art was guided in its adaptation of symbolism and allegory to scenes of the past, another phenomenon is explained which at first sight appears singular, the preference given to Old Testament subjects over those from the Gospels. This may in part be attributed to the Semitic spirit, which still prevailed in the earliest communities, among whom the Biblical facts already fixed by centuries of written tradition would possess greater authority than facts from the Gospels, which were still fluctuating between the various recent traditions. It might also be attributed to the greater if not exclusive influence of the Gospel of S. John, which is more polemic in character and contains fewer episodes than the others, but I think that the chief reason of this preference lies in the symbolic and allegorical direction of Christian art. The truth of the Christian religion rested, in the eyes of the believers, on the realization of the prophecies contained in the Bible. The Bible was both testimony and authority. The Biblical facts also which were not connected with any prophecy, but in which the protection of the Lord was revealed, acquired the value of testimony from this general character which was recognized in the Bible. The facts from the New Testament on the other hand, the actions of Jesus and the Apostles, were the reality of the present or of a time just past. Christian

art therefore, with the intention of being symbolic and allegorical, would prefer the representation of historical testimony to that of reality, would in fact prefer the Old Testament to the New.

Let us add that with scenes from the Evangelists art fell into the danger from which the latent spirit of Semitism would have held it aloof, the danger of having to represent the divinity in person. The scenes with Abraham, Noah, Moses, Daniel or Jonah had no need of the personal intervention of the Lord; while the scenes of the Epiphany, the woman of Samaria, the miracles of healing, the multiplication of the loaves and the resurrection of Lazarus required the presence of Jesus. It is true that art avoided this representation of the Lord, and that when it could be left out without making the scene obscure it was left out. Thus we sometimes see the miracle of the paralytic man rendered by the figure of the sick man alone, taking his bed upon his shoulders. Jesus is not present here, but He is present in cases where the subject would not be comprehensible without Him, in the Epiphany, the episode of the woman of Samaria and the other episodes of healing.

Finally, after what we have observed the reason of one fact appears clear, though it had at first sight seemed inexplicable, the absence of the scene of the Passion in the paintings of the cemeteries. It was not a repugnance to the representation of Jesus on the cross which caused this subject to be excluded, for the martyrdom of God was for the primitive Christians, and remained for the whole of Christianity, the most glorious sign of their faith; it was the impossibility of giving a symbolic and allegorical value to a fact which lives in the Christian mind with the minutely precise traits of reality. The cross is present in this art of the cemetery, but without the presence of Jesus and only as a symbolic sign.

As the symbolic and allegorical character assumed by primitive Christian art determined the choice of subjects,

it influenced their composition. This art of the cemetery arose in the second half of the first century and flourished on one of the industrial branches of Pagan art —decorative art. If at first it appears poor and careless, this is not due to any general decadence of Pagan art, which was then celebrating the fasti of the Flavian period, and during the whole of the second century from Trajan to Marcus Aurelius showed itself full of life and originality, especially in the department of ornamentation. This poverty of early Christian art is attributable to the small value set upon beauty of form owing to its symbolic and allegorical nature. Its poverty is not a sign of Christian humility and indigence.

Composition and Form in the Cemetery Paintings.

But though poor in natural inspiration it is original. In spite of all the careful study carried out with the object of connecting the Christian motives and subjects with Pagan models its originality is established by these very subjects.

This is specially confirmed by the manner in which the scenes are conceived. Never had there been in art a greater reduction of the elements of a scene without disturbing its clearness. For the story of Noah in the Ark we have only the figure of Noah emerging from the waist upwards from the ark, like Jack-in-the-box. Sometimes there is the dove. For the miracle of Moses and the spring of water the elements of the scene are only Moses and the rock. For the three children in the furnace art limits itself to the presentment of three little figures of the same size in the midst of summarily painted flames. For Daniel in the lions' den the figure of the prophet between two lions suffices. For the miracle of the man stricken with the palsy there is only the figure of the sick man taking up his bed on his shoulders. For the resurrection of Lazarus the whole is limited to the figure of Christ and the tomb within which stands the mummy-like figure of the friend of Jesus. If the elements are more numerous in some other scenes, such as

the sacrifice of Abraham or the Epiphany, this is not due to a passion for representation on the part of the artist, but to the necessity of their appearance for the sake of clearness.

The sobriety of Christian art in the cemetery paintings is in open contrast with the predominant character of contemporary Pagan art, especially of Imperial art. This art, the inheritor of the Greek tradition which had accentuated the representative contents of the scenes, instead of reducing the elements had increased them by superfluous and useless additions. Roman art had ended by surpassing Greek art in this, for it had introduced into the scene a throng of spectators who filled up all the space and crowded up the figures. And though the presence of this crowd might have been legitimate in the scenes commemorating the life of an emperor, Roman art transported it to the mythical scenes which decorated the sarcophagi. I think indeed that this massing together of figures on the Roman sarcophagi, contrary to the usual practice with regard to the so-called Greek type of sarcophagus, is not, as has been suggested, the result of an unsuccessful translation into sculpture of a model in painting by which the figures arranged in the space are brought close together in the relief, but is rather a characteristic feature of Roman art, which was no longer capable of conceiving any scene without an extraordinary number of actors and spectators. We should seek in vain for any such crowding up of the mythical scenes in the Campanian paintings in which the purely Greek spirit still breathes.

The Christian art of the cemeteries was quite distinct from contemporary Pagan art. The artists may have been the same, but they entered on their work in an absolutely different spirit. Now this sobriety of representation in Christian art might be considered as the result of its independent origin. In fact archaic art, like the art of children, reduces the elements of representation to a minimum by selection. But the sobriety of the art of the cemeteries is

rather the consequence of its symbolic and allegorical nature. The scene was only intended to appeal to the spectator, not absorb his attention in an examination of its elements, nor to interest and delight him, but the sight of the Biblical pictures was intended to make him meditate upon his own life and the hope of his own soul. As the symbol in every religion is reduced to a single object or a single figure—in the Assyrio-Babylonian religion human figures also were used as symbols—symbolic art could only reduce to a minimum the elements of a scene.

The sobriety of Christian art in the composition of the scene in the cemetery paintings explains how it lacks the continuous system of narration in which one single individual is repeated in the different moments of an action—a system considered peculiar to Christian art. Beyond the story of Jonah we find here no successive scenes of the same story. Abraham, Noah, Moses, Daniel and Lazarus are represented in one episode only. Jonah sometimes appears in three successive scenes in the same decorative scheme: Jonah swallowed by the sea monster, Jonah thrown up again by the monster and Jonah reposing beneath the bush. But in this case, too, these scenes are not reproduced from a desire to tell a story, as in the Roman commemorative reliefs or the sarcophagi with mythological representations; they have been brought together because each scene corresponds to a different incident in connection with Jonah and therefore to a different symbol. Jonah was swallowed by the monster in consequence of his disobedience to the Lord: instead of going to Nineveh as God had commanded him, he tried to flee to Tarshish. Jonah was thrown up again by the monster because he had glorified the Lord from inside the monster. Jonah lay down beneath the bush because he was angry with the Lord, who after ordering him to preach against Nineveh, had been merciful and would not punish the city. Under the bush the Lord points out by the example of the gourd

why He should be merciful to Nineveh, and why His mercy should be turned towards sinners when they repent. The three scenes from Jonah are therefore not a continuous narrative any more than the cemetery paintings in which Christ appears, the miracle of the man stricken with the palsy for example, or that of the woman with the issue of blood or of Lazarus. The symbol does not spring from the figure of Christ, but from the person benefiting by the miracle; it is not in the figure of Jonah, but in the situation in which his disobedience, his confidence or his anger has placed him.

The symbolical and allegorical character of Christian cemetery painting determined the treatment of form, as it regulated the choice of the scenes and their composition. This art which flowed from the perennial spring of ornamental art, and had from the first accepted its minute gracefulness, ended by taking all importance from form in view of the value exclusively attributed to the symbol. It has certainly not lost its inheritance of foreshortening, chiaroscuro and perspective, the illusive means of representation which Greek art had obtained by so much labour, but instead of using them with a certain degree of artistic skill, so as to be able to play with them as ornamental Pagan art had done during the same period, Christian art by degrees destroyed their power of illusion. The foreshortening of the face and feet, the light and shade of the flesh and drapery, the perspective of the small building where Lazarus stands, show that the artists were acquainted with these means, but by reducing the power of illusion were returning to the conventions of parallel representation and flat colour.

It is a phenomenon found also in Buddhist art and the Eastern schools of art derived from it, a phenomenon which in Christian art too was connected with the greater importance given to the contents of the scene than to the forms which clothed it. Christian art neglected form not through contempt of it, but because beauty would have added nothing

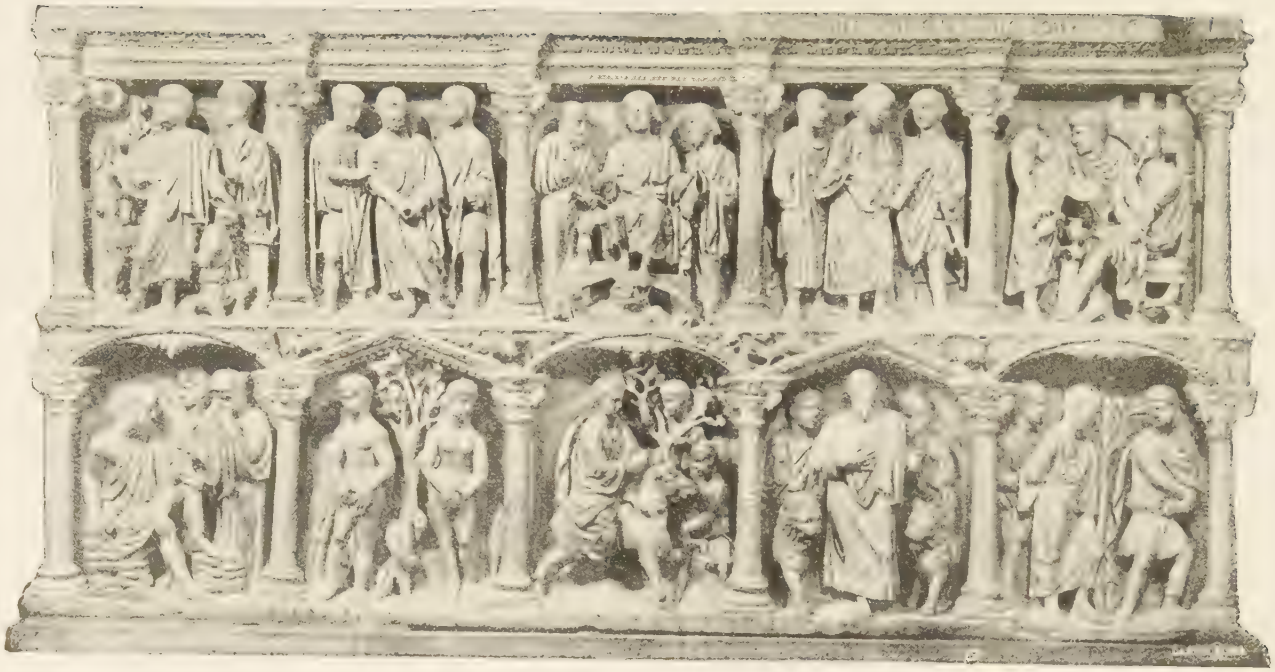


FIG. 174.—SARCOPHAGUS OF JUNIUS BASSUS, WITH SCENES FROM THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS.

(Grotte Vaticane.)

(*Photo Alinari.*)

[*See page* 341.]

To face p. 340.

FIG. 175.—SARCOPHAGUS WITH SCENES FROM THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS.

(Lateran.)

(*Photo Alinari*)

FIG. 176.—SARCOPHAGUS WITH SCENES FROM THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS.

(Lateran.)

(*Photo Alinari.*)

[*See page* 341.]

to the symbol or allegory which was aimed at as the beginning and end of the scene and as its exclusive object. This decadence of form is already visible when we compare the cemetery paintings of the first and second centuries with those of the third and fourth, and is still more evident during the Middle Ages in the whole of Christian art up to the time when the importance of its works was thought to consist not in their aspect but in their content.

Subjects, Composition and Form in the Sarcophagi.

Besides the decoration of the cemeteries the sarcophagi were the work of primitive symbolic and allegorical Christian art.* Many of the remarks just made are equally applicable to these works of art. They correspond to the same funerary requirements and the same spirit, and follow a parallel road both in the contents of the scene and the treatment of form. The duration of this form of art was about equal to that of the cemetery paintings. The Christian sarcophagi first appeared in the second century, attained their best development in the third and fourth and became decadent in the fifth century. As cemetery paintings originated in Pagan decorative art and had assumed its principal motives and accessories, so did the Christian sarcophagi take from the Pagan sarcophagi their external form and appearance. Also, as cemetery painting had used Pagan subjects and attributed to them a new symbolic value, some sarcophagi bearing Pagan symbols—Cupid and Psyche, vintage—were used by Christians. But a symbolism interwoven with scenes from the Old and New Testaments soon became predominant in the decoration of sarcophagi (Figs. 174–176).

The subjects are much the same as in the cemetery paintings: Adam and Eve near the tree in the terrestrial Paradise, the sacrifice of Abraham, Noah in the ark, Moses striking the rock, Daniel among the lions, Jonah swallowed

* R. Garrucci, *Storia dell' Arte Cristiana*, Prato, 1879, v.

and thrown up by the monster, the coming of the Magi, the cure of the man sick of the palsy, of the blind man and of the woman with the issue of blood, the miracle of the loaves, the resurrection of Lazarus, S. Peter's denial of Jesus. And if beside these subjects we find others such as Cain and Abel, the passage of the Red Sea, the Nativity, the entry of Christ into Jerusalem and Pilate, these subjects must not be regarded as peculiar to the art of the sarcophagi, for they may have been included in cemetery paintings which have since disappeared, and in any case they are conceived in the same spirit as the others.

The symbolic and allegorical nature of the subjects is indicated, as in the case of the cemetery paintings, by the sobriety of the elements of which they are constituted, by the great number if not by the prevalence of Old Testament subjects, by the isolation of each subject, and by their grouping without regard for chronological succession.

The art of the Christian sarcophagi, too, asserts its independence and originality with regard to the art of the Pagan sarcophagi. If the Christian sarcophagi seem really to resemble the Pagan sarcophagi through the crowding of the figures, this resemblance is only apparent. The crowding does not depend on the extension given to a scene, or to a few scenes, but on the large number of scenes upon a single monument. When a Pagan sarcophagus, by a continuous narrative, presents several scenes in succession, it offers, at the most, five or six situations, but generally only two or three ; the Christian sarcophagus, on the other hand, sometimes contains ten or more scenes grouped together. And the difference is not less evident in the succession of scenes. The artist makes constant jumps from the Old to the New Testament and from the New to the Old, and does not trouble himself about the chronological sequence which was attended to in the Pagan sarcophagi. The spirit of his art was different: he represented not narrative art but symbolical art, and knew that the symbol

would show equally from his scenes in whatever order they were arranged. If some sarcophagus of the latest period presents a smaller number of scenes and a greater degree of preoccupation for continuity, that is not due to internal progress in this branch of art but to external influence, to a change of the Christian spirit which is effecting a transformation in that art from symbolic and allegorical to didactic and exemplary.

We may note finally that in the sarcophagi as in the cemetery paintings there is no subject that is not taken from the past, no scene which displays the joys or pains of the future life. Jesus always appears in the miracles, or if He is represented in heaven He is surrounded by the figures of the Apostles, figures of the past, not the persons for whom these monuments were intended.

For the treatment of form we may repeat what we said in the case of the cemetery paintings. They are careless, and later on are still more carelessly done, not through humility and poverty, but on account of the small importance attributed to form by an art which chiefly aimed at symbolic value. Thus the foreshortening of the figures and their grouping, which in the earliest sarcophagi were not inferior to the foreshortening and grouping of the Pagan sarcophagi, deteriorated in later times, so that the full-face position was substituted for the oblique position and the clearness of the action was more and more diminished.

The nature of the subjects of this art suggests a comparison with the earliest Greek mythological art. We observed that Greek mythology was fragmentary, that it only had isolated episodes of the lives of separate gods and heroes, and that this characteristic was reflected in the works of art of the chest of Cypselus and the throne of Amyclæ, on the François vase and on the friezes and metopes of the temples. We find the same choice of isolated episodes in the primitive Christian art of the cemeteries and sarcophagi, not because

this was a reflection of the conditions in which the tradition was collected, for both the Old and New Testaments contained continuous narratives, but because this was required by the symbolic and allegorical character assumed by art. It was difficult to Greek art to eliminate this breaking up and isolation of subjects, and even when there was an attempt at concentration upon the enterprises of Herakles or Theseus, the contests of the Giants, of the Centaurs or of the Amazons, it was not wholly successful. Christian art had to free itself from them by the very nature of the religious tradition once this was seen without the screen of symbolism and allegory.

And this conquest was the work of didactic and exemplary Christian art, that art which began its course in the fourth century, the period after which symbolic and allegorical art became decadent.

But before studying this new phase of Christian art it is necessary to throw light on a phenomenon which shows how this Christian art by degrees lost its original spirit. At its origin it had been exclusively a funerary art, for it aimed above all at the life beyond the tomb and had made of the cemeteries the chief place of worship. But when churches were substituted for cemeteries, when the cult was concentrated on the figure of the divinity, this funerary art became decadent and disappeared. The decadence is seen in the latest sarcophagi of the sixth and seventh centuries, in which the ornamental part prevails and the isolated figures of the Saviour, the Apostles or the Martyrs, no longer united by any common action, are substituted for the groups. In this connection we will point to the series of sarcophagi from Ravenna and France. The subjects from the Old and New Testaments pass to the grand decorative art of the churches and funerary art has no longer any special subject of its own. For this reason in the Middle Ages and in modern times it was reduced to representing a figure of the defunct lying upon his death-bed, or his living image accompanied by allegorical

figures. So Christian art shows itself the poorest of human arts in the funerary department, though it had begun its course as funerary art. In this also it shows proof that it lacked a precise and material vision of the future.

An instructive principle is hidden in symbol and in allegory, especially when they refer to scenes of the past. The early Christians who saw upon the walls of the cemeteries or sides of the sarcophagi the painted or sculptured figures of Abraham, Noah, Moses, Daniel, Jonah or Lazarus would meditate on the symbol contained in those figures and think of baptism, of the salvation of sinners, of the protection of God and of the Resurrection, and could not have suppressed the historical reality of these scenes. From a consideration of the allegory they would pass to the consideration of example. Abraham, Noah, Moses, Daniel, Jonah and Lazarus have obtained their recompense, salvation, because they acted in conformity with the will of God. Their actions are to be imitated: they are examples, models.

Didactic and Exemplary Art.

But if the works of Biblical personages are exemplary, if they are of value for their actual contents, there is no need to choose out isolated personages and episodes. The whole of the Bible has this value, for it is entirely due to divine inspiration.

When the spirit of Christianity had once received this impetus the art which had seconded it must be a commentary upon the whole Bible, and must be an art of continuous narration in order to present the contents of the Scriptures before the eyes of those who could not read. To this idea we owe the whole illustrative art of the codices, whose best productions are those of the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries, all the art of the narrative scenes in mosaic similar to those in the nave of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome, the decoration of church doors like that of Santa Sabina in Rome, and of

church furniture like that in the Cathedral of S. Massimiano at Ravenna. But both the mosaics and the reliefs on doors and furniture are on examination found to be an application of the illustrative system of the codices.

There is no doubt that the origin of the illustrated codices of the type of the Genesis of Vienna, the Roll of Joshua in the Vatican Library and the Gospel of Rossano must be sought for among the Greek Christian communities in the East, whether in Egypt, Syria or Asia Minor I must leave undecided. The exact locality is not of great importance for the study of the course of thought represented by this art. The illustrated codices corresponded only to the needs of Greek Christian communities. It is a mistake to compare these illustrations of the codices with those of the Egyptian funerary papyri: for Egyptian religion the papyri had magical value, they were to ensure something to the defunct; for the Christian religion the illustrations had exemplary force only, they were to influence the reader or the spectator. Christian art, without doubt, has taken from the East, and particularly from Egypt, the example of the codex illustration, but through the medium of another art, Greek art.

Greek art had already made use of these illustrations to the text with representations of figures in a more durable material than papyrus or parchment; it had produced in marble and clay both vases and the Iliac tablets, on which figures and scenes formed a commentary to the résumé of the Homeric poems or the poems of the Cycle. In the Homeric codex in the Ambrosian Library, which is contemporary with the Biblical codices, we have testimony to the fact that Greek art also produced illustrations to codices. The Virgilian codex of the Vatican shows that this method of illustration was also followed by Latin civilization and literature.

Seeing that illustrations with didactic intention made to the texts originated among the Greeks of the East, we must

now inquire how the Biblical subjects came to be thus illustrated. This was through the constant weakening of the spirit of Semitism, which had received its first defeat in symbolic and allegorical funerary art. This art had already introduced into the Biblical scenes the figure of the divinity and after that nothing could prevent the illustration of the sacred books.

And as this form of illustrative art originated in and was chiefly cultivated by the Græco-Oriental communities, while the symbolic and allegorical art of the cemetery paintings and sarcophagi appears more characteristic of the Western communities, we observe a difference in the spirit which animated the different Christian societies. The Græco-Oriental communities, helped by the influence of the classical tradition of art with figure representation, had been able with less difficulty to overcome the spirit of Semitism which was averse to art—it was in the East, as we may remember, that the contest against the Iconoclasts was successful—the Western Christian communities on the other hand had been more faithful to the principle of avoidance of images instilled by the first teachers of the faith and had received no pressure from outside that might free them from prejudice; for art in the West was more in use for decorative purposes than in the East, and the purely Roman civilization had preserved its original indifference to the use of images. But the day was not far when the Western communities also would accept the new art which came from the East.

Subjects and Form in Exemplary Art.

The exemplary form of art applied to the illustration of the codices arose with a different spirit from that of symbolic and allegorical art, and this spirit was shown in the choice of subjects and in their form and treatment.

In the first place we no longer find isolated scenes. There are no more extracts from the Bible. The illustration of an entire sacred book would require the

successive treatment of the events. If the artist preferred certain scenes on account of the special scope of the codex or for liturgical reasons, he might eliminate others on account of artistic difficulties, but as he no longer sought out the hidden meaning of a scene to express its real value he had to follow the text step by step in his illustrations. And thus the system of continuous narration which was absent from the art of the cemeteries and sarcophagi appears in these codices.

In this new form of art the treatment of the separate episodes is different also. In symbolic art the elements of the scene were reduced to a minimum, while in this the artist lingers with evident pleasure over the secondary figures and accessories. As his object is to teach, the more clearly he renders the scene in all its details the better he will succeed in his intention. A comparison between the scene of Noah's ark in the Genesis of Vienna (Fig. 177) or the scene of the resurrection of Lazarus in the Rossano codex (Fig. 178) with similar scenes in the cemetery paintings and sarcophagi will show better than words the difference between symbolic and didactic art.

The nature of the scenes and their arrangement had some influence on the treatment of form. The artist, no longer fettered by the thought of the symbol, does not neglect form, as it contributes to the clearness of the scene represented. He therefore delays with a certain degree of passion over the nude figures and drapery and the arms and the elements of landscape. He is intentionally clear and minute and even gives expression to the countenances; and when he does not succeed in rendering the sentiment desired he uses gesture so as to produce at least an approximate effect on the mind of the spectator.

The codices of this period, the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries, are certainly not all of equal value, but if we take the best and study their perfections we must recognize that this represents a brief golden age in Christian art before it

FIG. 177.—COMING OUT OF THE ARK.

(Vienna Genesis.)

(*Hartel-Wickhoff*, pl. 4.)

FIG. 178.—RESURRECTION OF LAZARUS.

Rossano Gospels.

(*Muñoz*, pl. 1.)

[*See page* 348.]

FIG. 179.—MOSAICS OF THE ARCH IN THE CHURCH OF S. MARIA MAGGIORE, ROME.

Scenes from the life of Jesus.

(*Photo Alinari.*) [*See page* 349.]

stiffened into the form of iconolatrous art known as Byzantine. One characteristic feature distinguishes these codices and marks them as earlier than the iconolatrous art. In these figures the artist still has a lively sense of action, he does not paint as inert the figures of simple spectators. Even the figures of the Prophets who are represented beneath the exemplary scenes in the Rossano codex pointing inwards, with an oblique gesture of the head, seem to move : they are proclaiming the miracle. Even the figures on thrones are not full-face but their heads are slightly turned to one side. We look in vain through all these codices for a figure which is facing the spectator and is in that conventional position of inertia and indifference which is multiplied indefinitely somewhat later by iconolatrous art. To see the difference one need only compare these codices with those of the seventh century onwards.

Exemplary art which had developed naturally from the illustrations to the codices was to emerge from these narrow bounds to the decoration of great buildings, a similar step to that of the Greek mythological scenes from the small industrial art to the friezes, pediments and metopes of the great temples. The subjects which would instruct a single person when he turned over the volume or went through the pages of the codex could, when spread over the walls of a church, instruct a whole community.

The subjects and their special treatment testify to this origin. If we examine the mosaics of the nave of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome representing events in the life of Abraham, Moses, Joshua and Christ (Fig. 179) we see the perfect agreement with the illustrations of the codex. And although the choice of subjects is determined by a special didactic criterion and they are earlier than the fifth century* the treatment of the scene shows that we are beyond the

* J. Paul Richter, A. Cameron Taylor, *The Golden Age of Classic Christian Art*, London, 1901.

symbolic and allegorical stage and that the artist has aimed at example.

This art of example creeps in everywhere; it does for Christianity what decorative art had done for Greek civilization, it covers the doors of the churches (Fig. 180), the church furniture (Fig. 181) and ordinary furniture, and though poverty stricken and decadent it passes down through the Middle Ages until it overpowers the iconolatrous art which from the seventh century was to oust it from the throne, and hands over its subjects and methods to that narrative art which from the thirteenth century onward was to celebrate the greatest triumphs of Christian art.

Iconolatrous Art.

As the germ of didactic and exemplary art was concealed in symbolic and allegorical art, iconolatrous art was cherished in the lap of this latter. Up to this time Christian art produced no cult images. The representation of Biblical facts had been accepted, but the deity in them was one of the actors, not an object of adoration. Even in the mosaics of the nave of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome, where the scenes on the arch refer to episodes in the life of Jesus, the artist was afraid to represent Him alone outside the scene of action, so in the centre of the arch he put only the throne with the crown and the cross. But like Buddhist art, which had also arisen with the object of example, it could not resist for long that which is a necessity for the soul of the believer when he sees the Church making use of figures—that is, to ask protection of these figures and especially of the chief actor, and so it became iconolatrous art and Christianity could not hold back from this fatal declivity. Iconolatry, the triumph of the cult of images, was a victory of the popular spirit and was inevitable from the moment that the Christian religion had conquered the whole of ancient society and had attracted into its orbit individuals who in their old religions had asked help from images of the divinity. We must distinguish between the first

FIG. 180. DOOR OF THE CHURCH OF S. SABINA, ROME.

Scenes from the Old and New Testaments.

(*Photo Alinari.*)

[*See page* 350.]

FIG. 181.—PULPIT OF S. MASSIMIANO (CATHEDRAL, RAVENNA).

Scenes from the life of Joseph.

(*Photo Alinari.*)

[*See page* 350.]

followers of Christianity who, whether humble or powerful, had approached the new faith by their own choice and had accepted in all sincerity all the spirit of love and charity and the hope in a life beyond the tomb, and the people who entered the Church from the fourth century onward because Christianity had become the predominant religion and who had brought in with them the heritage of earlier religious conceptions. The Church paid for the increase in its numbers by the purity of its doctrines. The paganizing of the Christian Church did not, in fact, begin when it took its artistic forms from the antique, but when the cult of images arose in its art.

The characteristics of the art which is usually termed Byzantine and which was predominant in the West from the sixth to the twelfth century, having handed on its principles to Romanic and Gothic art, and which still dominates in the traditions of ecclesiastical art in the East, mark the triumph of iconolatry. The spiritual change which was to lead from the vivacious scenes of the codices and of the mosaics of the nave of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome to iconolatrous art was the continuation of that which had led from symbolical and allegorical art to exemplary art. Allegorical art had only contained a call to that which was the aspiration of every believer, the salvation of his soul and the resurrection; in exemplary art the interest was concentrated on the scene itself as represented, without allusion to the fate after death—the omnipotence of God was the object of admiration. At this point it was natural to think that if God had in the past granted His protection to so many men, if He had saved them from sickness and danger, He must equally protect the men present who were no less afflicted by misfortune. The miracles of Jesus which, particularly in the Gospels, were only a testimony to His divine nature acquired in the eyes of new believers the value of a guarantee of His constant omnipotence. But since the divinity was represented as connected with actions in the past, that is, ready to protect other persons, it seemed as if

He would be unable to concern Himself about the persons present. It was therefore necessary to make of Him not a person of the past, but a person of the present, to release Him from all action and place Him in relation with the spectator, and to represent Him in full face and inert—make Him, in fact, a cult image.

Once this principle was established for the divinity, it was extended to the figures of the Evangelists, Apostles, Saints and Martyrs. Since they had operated in the past under the direct divine inspiration, this inspiration must continue in the present. Either as direct agents or intermediaries with God they could help humanity at any moment. And they too must be represented in full face and inert.

Release from action, immobility are the characteristic features of iconolatrous art. It represents a backward step on the way of the spirit. This art becomes rigid not because it no longer has a vivid sense of form, but because these were the conventions demanded by the scope of the images. Thought and faith became rigid before form.

Course of Iconolatrous Art.

It must not be thought that the triumph of this new current was easy or sudden. Notwithstanding the destruction of many monuments of this period, the mosaics of the churches of Rome and Ravenna remain to testify to the way in which this work was carried out from the sixth century onward.

The mosaics of the apse of Santa Pudenziana in Rome (Fig. 182), in spite of later restoration, show that in the fourth century A.D. the iconolatrous tendency had not yet made itself felt. Christ sits upon a throne in the midst of the Apostles, but the scene is arranged in a semicircle and none of the figures seem to be preoccupied with the outside spectator. The Apostles turn their heads to one side or the other and seem to be conversing with each other. Jesus Himself is not looking straight before Him, but His eyes turn to the right, while the

FIG. 182.—MOSAICS OF THE APSE, CHURCH OF S. PUDENZIANA (ROME).

Christ in the midst of the Apostles.

(*Photo Alinari.*) [*See page* 352.]

To face p. 352.

FIG. 183.—MOSAICS OF THE APSE, CHURCH OF SS COSMAS AND DAMIAN (ROME).

Christ between S. Peter, S. Paul, S. Cosmas, S. Damian, S. Felix and S. Theodore.

movement of His hand is directed to the left. Seated figures in so oblique a position must be sought in the contemporary art of the codices. Compare the figure of Pilate, for example, in the Rossano codex.

We will now turn to the sixth century mosaics of the apse of SS. Cosmas and Damian in Rome (Fig. 183), and we shall see the iconolatrous manner near the time of its predominance. Jesus is immovable in the midst and looks straight before Him: the chief Apostles, SS. Cosmas and Damian, S. Felix and S. Theodore, are walking towards Him or pointing to Him, but their heads are turned straight towards the spectator outside the picture.

In the mosaics of the great arch of S. Lorenzo outside the walls in Rome, somewhat later in date but still of the sixth century, not only is Christ immovable in the centre, but S. Peter, S. Paul, S. Lorenzo, S. Stephen, S. Hippolitus and Bishop Pelagius are also immovable and looking straight before them. From this period iconolatrous art is fixed, and all the mosaics of the Roman churches from those of Sant' Agnese, which belong to the seventh century (Fig. 184), to those of the Church of S. Mark, which belong to the ninth (Fig. 185), maintain the rigid full-face position and the immobility of the figures of the deity and the Saints.

A movement similar to that of iconolatry, tending to the isolation of the figures and the full-face position, is seen in the mosaics of Ravenna. In the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, which dates from the first half of the fifth century, we have still an echo of primitive symbolic art. Christ is here represented as a young shepherd in the midst of his flock, but from the position of His face He appears to take no notice of the outside spectator; the sheep with their heads turned towards the shepherd seem to give movement to the scene (Fig. 186). The triumph of the Christian faith is represented in the same symbolic fashion: S. Lorenzo is approaching the instruments of his martyrdom, while the four Gospels are lying in the chest.

Here, too, the scene is one of movement, though it contains only one human figure: S. Lorenzo is intent on action. And the iconolatrous convention is absent too from the Apostles, who are represented in the arcades and the vault; though they are isolated figures they are in the act of walking and their faces are foreshortened.

In the mosaics of the Baptistery of S. Giovanni in Fonte, which may be of the middle of the fifth century, the iconolatrous tendency begins to make way. The only scene of action is in the centre of the cupola (Fig. 187), where the Baptism of Jesus is represented. Below are the figures of the Apostles walking in two opposite directions with S. Peter and S. Paul at their head, hastening towards each other. The artist here has not known how to isolate the figures and represent them as immovable, but some of them turn their heads to a full-face position and seem to arrest their steps.

In the Church of S. Apollinare Nuovo we can perceive the difference which the iconolatrous tendency had impressed on art in a few score years (Fig. 188). On the upper part are the mosaics which date back to the time of Theodoric and were made in the early years of the sixth century. Below are the mosaics added by Archbishop Agnello in the second half of the sixth century. The mosaics of Theodoric include in the upper zone scenes from the New Testament (sermons, miracles of Jesus and the Passion), below are figures of Prophets and Saints. It is noticeable that the scenes from the life of Jesus are very small in size. They almost disappear, like accessory elements, in comparison with the isolated figures which take up so much space below. We are far from the decoration of the nave of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome, in which the histories of Abraham, Moses, Joshua and Christ occupy the whole attention of the spectator. The difference is not only one of size but lies also in the way the scene is conceived. Though a scene of action it has no movement: the figures are inclined to be preoccupied with the outside spectator,

FIG. 184.—MOSAICS OF THE APSE, CHURCH OF S. AGNESE (ROME).
S. Agnes between S. Honorius I. and Symmachus.
(*Photo Alinari.*)

FIG. 185.—MOSAICS OF THE APSE, CHURCH OF S. MARK (ROME).
Christ between S. Mark, S. Agapitus S. Agnese, S. Felicianus, S. Mark and Gregory IV.

they break through the limits of the action and often look lifelessly out of the picture. This iconolatrous tendency is still more plainly shown by the figures of the Prophets and Saints in the lower zone. Though they are not yet absolutely rigid they are nearly all inclined to turn full-face. The complete triumph of iconolatry is found in the mosaic figures added by Archbishop Agnello. On the wall to the right twenty-six Martyrs with crowns approach Jesus, who is sitting on a throne in the midst of four Angels; on the wall to the left twenty-two Virgins and the Magi advance towards the Madonna with the Child, also enthroned amid four Angels. The iconolatrous conventionalism is in full triumph in the figures of Jesus, the Madonna and the Angels, who are turned to face the spectator without concerning themselves about the long train of Martyrs and Virgins who approach them, but still more strangely triumphant is this convention in the figures of the Martyrs and Virgins who instead of making their way to the divine group seem to be actually standing still and are looking out of the picture. One instinctively compares this mosaic with the frieze of the Parthenon on account of this passing of the figures in two different directions along the walls of a quadrangular building, and one notes the difference between a narrative art which would even make the gods actors in the scene and an iconolatrous art which would isolate from the action even the figures in movement.

Similar conditions to those of the mosaics of S. Apollinare are found in those of the Church of S. Vitale in Ravenna, which also date from the middle of the sixth century. Here also the scenes of action are reduced to a minimum: only a few scenes from the life of Abraham and of Moses. For the rest, isolated figures of Jesus, of Angels, Prophets, Evangelists, Apostles and Saints. The absence of action has rendered no other mosaic so rigid as the figures of the groups of Justinian (Fig. 189) and of Theodora (Fig. 190) presenting offerings.

They seem to be holding out the offerings not to the divinity but to the spectator outside. The iconolatrous tendency has even falsified the nature of the action, the figures making the offering almost become figures to be contemplated and adored. A comparison is suggested here also with the Greek votive offerings, in which art has never forgotten to be narrative and always represents the bearers of offerings as in close relation to the divinity.

The principles which were gradually being established in the art of Rome and Ravenna dominate Christian art all over Europe up to the twelfth century. The term Byzantine art is not quite correctly applied to it, for it was not the influence of a city but a change in the spirit of Christianity which made it everywhere victorious. It marks the triumph of the isolated and inert figure, and corresponds to the idea of protection which the believer would ask of the image, in contradistinction to the symbolic meaning and the teaching by example which the first believers had sought there.

This iconolatrous art assumes different aspects in the different countries by the influence of various secondary causes, it is cultivated in painting and in relief sculpture, it passes from the inside of the churches to the outside walls and reflects in its forms various ethnical types, but always remains essentially the same.

All the mosaics and frescoes of the Græco-Oriental countries, the mosaics of the Sicilian churches of the Norman period, all the relief decoration of the Romanic churches of Italy, of the Gothic churches of France and the Rhenish provinces, and the polychrome glass of these same churches come under the influence of the iconolatrous principle and give the chief place to the isolated figure. And the lesser arts follow the greater. If all this iconolatrous art be considered as a whole and compared with the exemplary art which had preceded it and the narrative art which followed it with the Renaissance, it will appear that isolation was predominant at the time,

FIG. 186.—MOSAICS IN THE MAUSOLEUM OF GALLA PLACIDIA (RAVENNA).
Christ as the Good Shepherd.
(Photo Alinari.) [*See page* 353.]

To face p. 356.

FIG. 187.—MOSAICS OF THE CUPOLA, S. GIOVANNI IN FONTE (RAVENNA).

Baptism of Jesus. The Apostles.

(*Photo Alinari.*)

[*See page* 354.]

and that the believer could only imagine himself as having no relation to other men but as being in relation to the divinity alone.

The influence which the iconolatrous principle may have had upon the treatment of form is quite comprehensible. By isolating the figure and removing it from the sphere of action art must be removed from nature. Besides, for the scope of this art, to seek for beauty or expression of form would be superfluous, even more superfluous than in the case of allegorical art or art for the purpose of example. In the isolated figures intended to represent divine beings the believer sought their protective force only, that same force which all the other peoples had sought in the idols, and we have established the fact that even Greek art had maintained the stiffness and inertia of the images and had gradually diminished all this solely through the influence of decorative art. Iconolatrous art, therefore, does not, any more than allegorical and exemplary art, abandon the means of representation left as a heritage by classical art—foreshortening, chiaroscuro, pictorial perspective and the oblique position in relief sculpture and statuary—but it applies their principles with a less degree of skill; hence the scantiness of productions which could be compared with what has been found in Buddhist art.

Persistence of Historical Subjects.

But it must not be thought that iconolatrous art has wasted all the patrimony which it inherited from earlier forms of art and that it was exhausted in the representation of isolated figures. It could not do away with the characteristic which had from the beginning impressed on Christian art the exclusive preoccupation with the past. Christianity was a religion with a historical foundation; its God had never in tradition been inactive and inert like the gods of other nations. To keep Him from an action was to do violence to the character of Christianity. But if this violence could be understood in

the case of the figures of God, the Prophets, Apostles, Evangelists or Saints, it was not so for all the other figures of tradition, which were for the future bound to action in the minds of believers.

Iconolatrous art had given the preponderance to isolated figures and had also isolated figures in scenes, but it could not abolish the whole historical contents of Christianity. And the torch which kept this tradition alight was the illustration of religious books. The numerous schools of illustration of this period show the influence of iconolatrous art. Whole pages are reserved for isolated full-face figures and in some groups the life-likeness of the scene is marred by the over-stiffness of the figures and their preoccupation with the outside spectator, but the complex of ideas and forms inherited from the ancient Græco-Oriental illustrative art is still preserved. The diffusion of the sacred books could only be for a didactic purpose, and this purpose would have to be maintained by the illustrations. While high art was becoming more rigid this art of illustration formed a reserve from which the Renaissance was one day to arise.

High art even with its iconolatrous tendency could not entirely neglect the historico-narrative inheritance of Christianity. A proof of this is seen in the space given to historical scenes in the midst of the more frequent isolated figures.

These narrative scenes continue to be found among the isolated figures of the deity, and of the Evangelists, Apostles and Saints, as well as episodes in the life of Jesus or of Mary, in the mosaics of the Græco-Oriental countries; in the convent of Daphni near Athens for example (Fig. 191).

In the mosaics of the Sicilian churches of the Norman period too the bust of Christ Pantokrator dominates the apse and the separate figures of the Virgin and Child, Angels, Prophets, Apostles and Saints triumph on the walls. We also find representations of scenes from the Old and New Testaments, as in the Palatine chapel at Palermo and the Cathedral of

FIG. 188.—MOSAICS OF THE NAVE, CHURCH OF S. APOLLINARE NUOVO (RAVENNA).

Scenes from the Gospels. Saints and Prophets. Jesus between Angels. Company of Martyrs.

(*Photo Alinari.*) [*See page* 354.]

To face p. 358.

FIG. 189.—MOSAICS IN THE CHURCH OF S. VITALE (RAVENNA).

Justinian and his Court.

(Photo Alinari.)

FIG. 190.—MOSAICS IN THE CHURCH OF S. VITALE (RAVENNA).

Theodora and her Court.

(Photo Alinari.)

[*See page* 355.]

Monreale (Fig. 192). The same may be said of the mosaics of the peristyle in the basilica of S. Mark at Venice, which represent scenes from the Old Testament, and those of the central nave, which show episodes from the life of Jesus, while in others are isolated figures of Christ, the Virgin and S. Mark.

In the Romanic churches the sculptor of the doors destroys the unity of the whole by reserving spaces for scenes of movement and action. The panels of the doors in particular are like an illustrated sacred book displayed before the eyes of the believer and contest the field of iconolatrous art, for by ancient tradition these doors are reserved for episodes of sacred history. We recall, for example, the sculptures of the façade of the Cathedral of Modena, those of the Church of S. Zeno at Verona (Fig. 193), the bronze doors of the Cathedral of Monreale and those of the Cathedral of Benevento.

And finally in the Gothic churches the isolated figures occupy the conspicuous windows, and in the spaces between the arches and upon the arches of the door they seem to adapt themselves to the architectural function of caryatides, while the lunette of the door or some rectangular space is reserved for scenes from the Old and New Testaments (Fig. 194).

Iconolatrous art, therefore, is predominant throughout the Middle Ages, but did not entirely suppress the elements of the earlier didactic art. It remained alive until it finally recovered its dominant position. Iconolatrous art, in fact, lasted —I will not say till the influence of Byzantium was felt, for this influence was for political reasons very soon weakened—but until the spirit of Christianity took more note of the immanent protection of the deity than of its inestimable historic patrimony of moral example. Iconolatrous art was therefore triumphant until Christianity, which had become rigid and small during the time of the Middle Ages, took its way toward the Renaissance. With this renewal it succeeded in one thing in which Buddhism had not succeeded, that is, in destroying the immobility of iconolatrous art.

Religion and Art

The Religious Renaissance.

It is a mistake, possibly due to the identification of the Renaissance with Humanism, to say that the Renaissance began when humanity shook off the heavy cloak of the Christian religion to attain the living spring of Classicism and that the Renaissance developed in opposition to the Church. This would only show an appreciation of the erudite and often formal work of Humanism, the clever but not seldom empty imitation of the masterpieces of classical literature, and would apply to the outward show and superficiality in the Renaissance, not the deep-lying causes of this change in spirit. The fervid resumption of classical literature was the consequence of this change, not the cause of it, and instead of having arisen in opposition to the Church, the Renaissance was born in the bosom of the Church with Dante and Giotto.

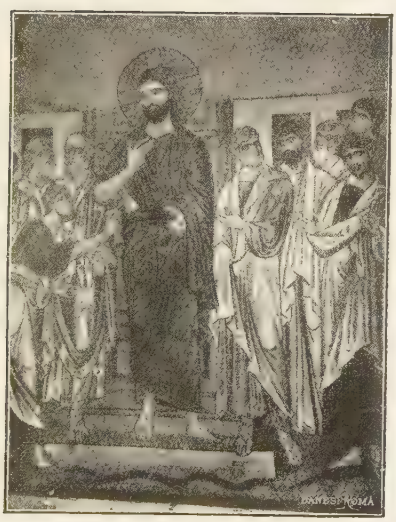
If we say that Dante with his work closes the Middle Ages it is an indication that we have not entered into the spirit of the *Divine Comedy* nor measured the enormous distance which separates it from the visions of the Middle Ages, and have not comprehended that the poet completed and improved in the Christian religion the work begun by Scholastic philosophy. With his journey into the land beyond the tomb he set in movement—sometimes to the point of vertigo—all that had become rigid and crystallized in the religious conception. Even when he seems doctrinal, when he takes up theories of love, of free-will and of life he releases them from the lengthy periods in which religious philosophy had stifled them and shakes them up and sets them going in the brief rhythm of his verse. After the glorious period of patristic literature, religious literature had fallen into the immobility of iconolatrous art. The work of Dante brings this immobility to an end, as the work of Giotto set in movement the inert figures of Byzantine art.

A spiritual movement in a deeply religious society such as Christianity in the Middle Ages could only be carried on

Entrance of Christ into Jerusalem.

Betrayal of Judas.

Crucifixion.



Incredulity of S. Thomas.

Christ brings the elect out of Hell.

FIG. 191.—MOSAICS IN THE CONVENT OF DAPHNI, NEAR ATHENS.

(*Photos Alinari.*)

[*See page* 358.]

FIG. 192.—MOSAICS IN THE CATHEDRAL OF MONREALE.

Episodes from Sacred History.

(*Photo Brogi.*)

[*See page* 359.]

under the auspices of the Church. Christianity had already initiated its new course of action by the establishment of the orders of S. Dominic and S. Francis, had again caused the hearts of men to beat who seemed to have been petrified during the long centuries of spiritual inactivity in the Middle Ages, had given to the faithful new work and new objects of life and, above all, had shaken monastic inertia and proclaimed itself to the world as a religion of love and action.

The work of Dante rose to the height of this new spiritual life and filled a lacuna in the Christian religion and also gave it a full vision of the life beyond the tomb. His work may have infinite literary, political, historical and moral merits, but its religious merit is above all these. Though not a canonical work it has had more influence on the minds and hearts of men than any sacred book. The idea of the world beyond the grave which presents itself to humanity is the conception of Dante.

But how has it filled this void in the Christian religion? Dante the poet composed a work of imagination and fancy but did not violate the historical character of Christianity. He has opened wide the doors of the unknowable—primitive Christian literature and art had done this timidly, but he has given a historical vision of the world beyond. The way had certainly been already pointed out in the Nekyia of Homer and by the sixth book of the *Æneid*, but he carried to the furthest point this preoccupation for the past. He has pointed out the penalties of sin and the trials of the repentant sinner, the rewards promised by God to the just; but all this concerns the dead, not the men who will die. The reading of the poem of Dante does not produce the same impression that the *Book of the Dead* must have given to the ancient Egyptians, that is, the fear of punishment and the hope of recompense, for in the penalties and rewards of Dante we see only the sufferings and joys of historical personages. They neither touch us nor those who come after us; they have been, but they are not in the present or the future.

Religion and Art

What Dante has shown in strong relief in his poems is not the punishment of the luxurious, the heretics or the traitors, nor the torment through which the proud, the envious and the gluttonous are refined; it is not the happiness enjoyed by the spirits of action, those who have fought for their religion, or the contemplative spirits, but Francesca da Rimini, Farinata degli Uberti, Conte Ugolino, Oderisi d'Agobbio, Sapia da Siena, Forese Donati, Giustiniano, Cacciaguida and Pier Damiano.

The vision of Dante, like the Last Judgment, is a review of the past, not a promise for the future. Even in the punishments, the reins and the goad which restrain and goad the souls in Purgatory, for example, he only touches the past—mythology and the Bible.

The work of Dante then with its historical character is not only in keeping with the original and intrinsic value of Christianity, but also establishes its own superiority over the mediæval visions. To the inert morality of these visions which assign punishments and promise rewards in general and make of the divinity a severe figure who looks impassibly before Him like the images of iconolatrous art, the poet opposes an active morality in which the deity reveals Himself through historical examples. Dante does not catechize, he relates. The Christian religion revives under the breath of his genius, shakes its limbs stiffened by their long inertia and goes back to the life whence it seems to have been exiled by the inactive adoration of the believers. In the same way S. Francis worked more than he preached. The *Divine Comedy*, instead of closing the Middle Ages, opened out the Renaissance.

Narrative Art.

The work of Nicolò Pisano and Giotto in plastic art corresponds to that of Dante in literature. The Renaissance in art begins with them and consists in having brought movement and action to the figures of religious art, in having taken away for ever the predominance of iconolatrous art and in having laid the foundation of narrative art.

FIG. 193.—RELIEFS IN THE FAÇADE OF THE CHURCH OF S. ZENO (VERONA)

Episodes from Sacred History.

(*Photo Anderson.*)

[*See page* 359.]

FIG. 194.—RELIEFS OF THE DOOR ON THE RIGHT IN THE CHURCH OF NOTRE-DAME (PARIS).
Madonna and Child enthroned. Episodes from the Gospels.

It will be understood that neither the one nor the other drew this art out of nothing by a stroke of genius. While iconolatrous art was triumphant all through the Middle Ages the patrimony of didactic Christian art was not completely lost. In Romanic sculpture, in Gothic sculpture, in the whole of the art of the last period of the Middle Ages, from the frescoes on the walls to the polychrome windows, from the inlaid work to the miniatures, the Renaissance was preparing to develop in Italy and in the Rhenish and Flemish schools. If when Nicolò Pisano and Giotto arose in Italy they owed it to their own individual genius that they had been able to rise so far above their predecessors, they also owed something to the teaching of those latent forces which had come down to them from an earlier form of art.

And what a mistake it would have been to isolate them; to seek the greatness of the art of Nicolò Pisano in his imitation of classical art is to diminish the grandeur of a spiritual and artistic phenomenon. He may have drawn the types of some of his heads from his study of the reliefs of Roman sarcophagi; above all he may have learnt from classical relief sculpture a wiser distribution of planes and of figures, but the greatness of his art, like that of Giotto, who had no models in Greek and Roman painting, consists in his introduction of movement, action and life into sacred subjects. The imitation of classical art was an individual phenomenon, as were also the currents which during the Renaissance period drew the artists to prefer certain types and certain manifestations of sentiment.

Once freed from the iconolatrous passion—from the oppressive sense of the protection expected from the deit , art concentrates its work upon the pious legends and sets to work upon them in a different spirit from that of didactic art. It did not indeed attempt to obliterate the didactic material, but it chiefly aimed at that which didactic art had neglected—the narrative element, and tried to tell a story rather than to teach. So that the manner of development, the action of the personages and the

influence of the action upon their mind and appearance were of more interest to the artist than the actual fact itself.

Christian art, then, after a long struggle against the iconolatrous tendency became from the thirteenth century onward narrative art and therefore a decorative art, and it assumed the same character which Greek mythological art had had from its origin. And the five centuries of development which it had from the thirteenth to the seventeenth century correspond to those five centuries which Greek art had from the seventh to the third century B.C. And if Christian and Greek art being equally narrative have aimed at different ideals of form, that is owing to the different nature of their contents.

Subjects of Narrative Art.

The subjects which Christian art had at its disposal at the time when it assumed a narrative character were in the first place subjects from the Old and New Testament. Some elements which had been favourite subjects in symbolic and allegorical art were now neglected or entirely abandoned because they did not contain elements suitable for narration. From the thirteenth century onward the episodes of Noah in the ark, Moses striking the rock, the three Hebrew children in the fiery furnace, Daniel among the lions, the healing of the woman with the issue of blood, or the man stricken with the palsy, or the denial of S. Peter no longer enjoyed the same degree of favour as formerly, for the narrative interest was as scanty as the symbolic sense was full. And so some of the subjects treated by didactic art, such as the enterprises of Joshua, were abandoned, because this didactic art in the mosaics of S. Maria Maggiore in Rome and in the illustrated codices had often represented successive moments of one single action, which were suitable for use as examples though not adapted to a narrative style.

The subjects from the Old and New Testaments were associated with the sacred legends of the Baptist and of the

Apostles, Evangelists, Martyrs and Saints which often contained still greater variety of narrative elements. But to these more or less well-known subjects in the earlier style of art were now added the equally rich legends of the life of S. Dominic and S. Francis, to whose work the renewal of the spirit of Christianity is due.

Now what are the general characteristics of these subjects? In the first place there is no isolated episode. Only in the Bible could the artist choose a single action of one personage, but the bonds of relationship and descent served to make of these isolated episodes a unity. No break was perceived between the different scenes relating to Adam, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Joseph and Moses, while in Greek mythology the want of connection between the enterprises of Meleager, Bellerophon and Perseus was distinctly felt. The isolated fact did not exist in the stories of the New Testament and the legends of the Saints, for all the acts of life were a preparation for the final act—death. The lives of the Saints were modelled upon the exemplary life of Jesus in the same way that the separate enterprises of the Greek heroes were partly reflected from the enterprises of the gods. The birth of Jesus was the first necessary act of His earthly life, as His death was the last act necessary for the redemption of men, and all His actions from the one extreme to the other and all His miracles were the confirmation of His divine birth and the announcement of His final work of salvation. And as Christianity held the object of life to be beyond death and every act of our earthly life was to hold this end in view, the lives of the Saints were filled with miraculous works and culminated in death.

Christian art did not find itself confronted with broken and fragmentary material like Greek art, but had to treat great cycles of actions. There was nothing for it but to divide the wall spaces of the churches and chapels into panels, break up the door surface into small compartments and to place rows of scenes upon the façades of the sacred edifices. Christian art

prefers the crowding together of several closely connected scenes upon a single superficies to the single isolated pictures or succession of independent scenes used in Greek decorative art.

Thus in the upper church of Assisi Giotto has painted the life of S. Francis in several scenes and in the Bardi Chapel in Santa Croce he repeated the same subject. In the Peruzzi Chapel he has treated the story of S. John Baptist and S. John the Evangelist, in the Chapel of the Scrovegni at Padua he relates the life of the Virgin and the life of Jesus (Fig. 195).

Of his school is the decoration of the Chapel of S. George at Padua, painted by Altichiero and Jacopo d' Avanzo. In these frescoes are scenes from the life of Jesus, of S. Lucy, S. Catherine, and S. George.

In the Castellani Chapel in Santa Croce in Florence the lives of S. John Baptist, S. John the Evangelist, S. Nicholas, and S. Anthony are related by Agnolo Gaddi.

Masolino and Masaccio paint scenes from the Bible and episodes from the life of S. Peter in the Brancacci Chapel in Santa Maria del Carmine in Florence (Fig. 196).

In the Chapel of Nicholas V in the Vatican Beato Angelico relates the life of S. Stephen and S. Lawrence.

And in 1490 Ghirlandajo represented scenes from the lives of the Virgin and of S. John Baptist in the choir of Santa Maria Novella in Florence.

And when this narrative art can no longer form groups of scenes from the life of a single personage, it forms series of scenes in connection with a theory or a symbol. Of the school of Giotto is the decoration of the Chapel of the Spaniards in Santa Maria Novella in Florence, in which the subjects contain an exposition of the doctrines of S. Thomas Aquinas. And in the great choir of the Church of S. Francis at Arezzo, Pier dei Franceschi relates the legend of the cross from the burial of Adam to the battles against Chosroes and Maxentius.

During the period from the fourteenth to the fifteenth

S. Joachim and the Shepherds.

Meeting of S. Joachim and S. Anna.

Baptism of Jesus.

Jesus turns out those who profaned the Temple.

Resurrection of Lazarus.

Deposition of Jesus from the Cross.

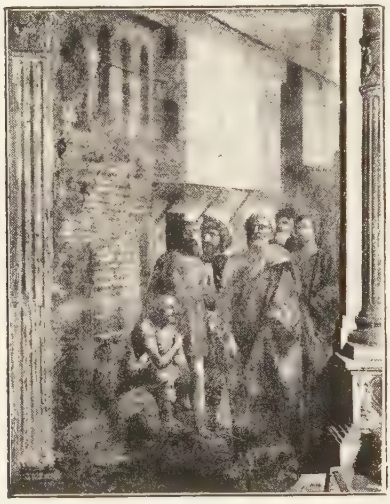
FIG. 103.—FRESCOES OF GIOTTO.

(Scrovegni Chapel, Padua.)

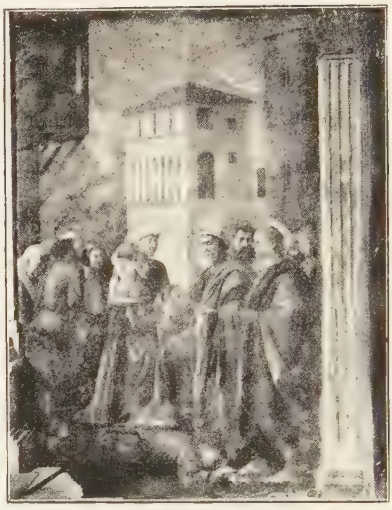
(*Photos Alinari.*)

[*See page* 366.]

S. Peter heals a cripple and raises Tabitha from the dead.



S. Peter heals the sick.



S. Peter gives alms to the poor.

Jesus commands S. Peter to take the money for the tribute out of the mouth of the fish.

FIG. 196.—FRESCOES BY MASOLINO AND MASACCIO.

(Brancacci Chapel in S. Maria del Carmine, Florence.)

(Photos Alinari.)

[*See page* 366.]

century we find one exception to this inclination to form groups of scenes. This is afforded by the paintings of Benozzo Gozzoli in the Riccardi Palace in Florence. The whole of the walls are devoted to one subject, the journey of the Magi. And the exception and the treatment of the subject recall to our mind the frieze of the Parthenon. The artist has devoted his attention entirely to displaying the procession in all the richness of form and colour, so that the sacred nature of the subject disappears. And if Benozzo Gozzoli made an exception in the case of the Riccardi Chapel, his work in the Campo Santo of Pisa representing numerous scenes from the Old Testament and in the Church of S. Francis in Montefalco, where he painted a series of pictures from the life of the Saint, show that he continued to follow the general trend of art.

But the paintings of the Riccardi Chapel indicate that the art of this period was tending to greater unity in decoration. We have here a parallel phenomenon to that observed in the case of Greek mythological art. And the desire for unity in the decoration of chapels or churches is an indication of the greater confidence felt by art in its power to obtain variety by the differentiation of types rather than by the multiplication of scenes. When art is able to compose a scene and produce by the number of individuals taking part in one single action that variety which was formerly obtained by diversity of scenes it shows its power of dominating its subjects instead of being dominated by them. And this is the case with the Cappella Nuova in the Cathedral of Orvieto, where instead of breaking up the wall space into a number of small panels, Luca Signorelli relates the triumph of religion in four scenes only of marvellous unity in composition : the proclamation and fall of Antichrist, the resurrection of the dead, the punishment of the damned and the entrance into Paradise (Fig. 197).

But the decoration of the Sistine Chapel shows that the natural tendency of Christian narrative art was to group together several scenes belonging to the same cycle. This is

seen not only in the wall frescoes of Sandro Botticelli, Domenico Ghirlandajo, Cosimo Roselli, Luca Signorelli, Pietro Perugino and Pinturicchio, who painted scenes from the life of Moses and of Jesus, but also in the ceiling painted by Michelangelo (Fig. 198). In this work Michelangelo reveals in his figures of the Prophets and Sibyls and of the so-called Precursors of Christ that his ability in seizing and synthetizing religious sentiment in isolated figures was still greater than in displaying it in crowded scenes. But though he had crowded to suffocation the nine central figures from Genesis and the four corner pictures with episodes from sacred history between the isolated figures, he shows by his choice of the Biblical cycle that he has followed the predominant spirit of narrative Christian art. Insuperable master of form as an expression of sentiment, in the scenes from the Bible, the best of them at least, he reduced to a minimum the figures taking part in the action, he has advanced towards narrative unity, but has only been able partly to reduce the number of the scenes. Nevertheless if we compare the decoration of Giotto in the Scrovegni Chapel at Padua, which contains thirty-eight pictures, with the decoration of the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, which has barely thirteen, we establish the movement towards unity of decoration which was completed within two centuries, a unity which testifies on the other hand to the greater capacity of art for obtaining the effect of variety with fewer scenes and fewer figures.

The characteristics of Christian narrative art as found in painting are seen again in the sculptured decoration of the walls and doors of sacred buildings and monuments.

On the pulpit of the Baptistery of Pisa Nicolò Pisano relates episodes of the life of Jesus (Fig. 199). Similar scenes are found on the pulpit of the Cathedral of Siena, which he completed with the help of his son Giovanni and of some of his pupils, and on the pulpits of S. Andrea at Pistoia and of the Cathedral of Pisa, the work of his son Giovanni.

The narrative spirit is evident in the reliefs which adorn the

FIG. 197.—FRESCOES BY LUCA SIGNORELLI (CATHEDRAL, ORVIETO).

The elect called up to Heaven.

(*Photo Alinari.*) [*See page* 367]

To face p. 368.

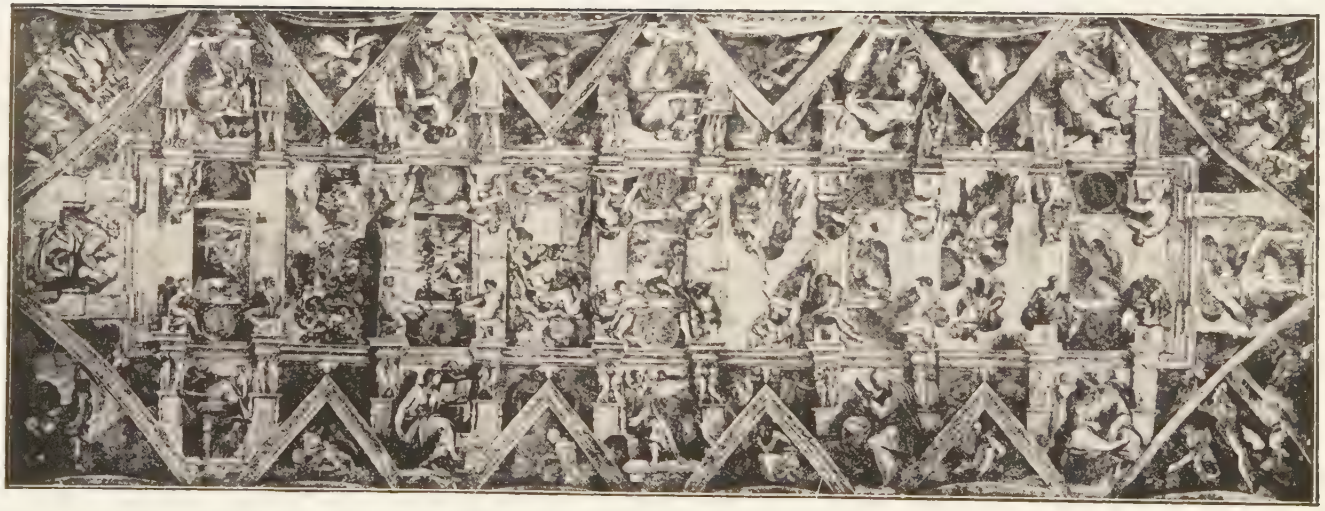


FIG. 198.—FRESCOES OF MICHELANGELO ON THE CEILING OF THE SISTINE CHAPEL.

Old Testament scenes, Prophets, Sibyls, and "Precursors of Christ."

(Photo Alinari.)

[*See page* 368.]

façade of the Cathedral of Orvieto, and which from the Creation (Fig. 200) to the Last Judgment enclose in a complete cycle the story of the Redemption.

On the most ancient door of the Baptistery of Florence Andrea Pisano tells the story of S. John.

On the tabernacle of Orcagna in Or San Michele in Florence are represented scenes from the life of the Virgin from the Nativity to the Assumption.

Jacopo della Quercia decorated the doors of S. Petronius at Bologna with episodes from Genesis and from the life of Jesus (Fig. 201).

On the north doors of the Baptistery in Florence Lorenzo Ghiberti relates the life of Jesus in twenty-eight pictures and represents ten Old Testament scenes on the east door (Fig. 202).

The pulpit by Benedetto da Maiano in Santa Croce, Florence, has five bas-reliefs containing scenes from the history of S. Francis and his order.

And when the chronological succession of a single cycle is not attempted, there are groups illustrating a form of doctrine. The reliefs of the Campanile of Giotto in Florence relate the story of civilization from its origin to the flourishing of the arts and sciences in Greece.

And if at the end of the fifteenth century we can no longer point out any great work in relief sculpture in this style, though in painting the tradition continues till the early part of the sixteenth century, this is owing to the single reason that sculpture appears less adapted than painting to the production of large scenes with many figures, and that though masterpieces consisting of single figures in statuary are still produced, relief sculpture becomes decadent.

We have found the first characteristic of narrative Christian art in the examples of painting and sculpture of the golden age, which lasted from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century—and the examples quoted are only the principal ones—the constant

grouping together of several scenes connected by descent or chronological succession or by a doctrinal principle. On account of this characteristic it offers a sharp contrast with Greek mythological art, in which isolated scenes prevail. Christian art has always found itself connected with large and complex scenes containing many figures. So that though in one way it has been more abundantly provided with material than Greek art, it has, on the other hand, been prevented from long concentration upon the same subjects and has also been deprived to a great extent of the discipline of tradition. In comparison with Greek classical art of the best period Christian art of the Renaissance shows greater artistic individuality. It is perhaps less correct, but it is richer and more varied.

Character of the Subjects in Narrative Art.

Now that we have determined what was the whole task which Christian narrative art had before it, we must see what were the units of this task—the character of the separate subjects which it had to treat. For the most part they are miraculous works in which the omnipotence of God is shown, His compassion for the good and, above all, His love for those who have believed and hoped in Him. The subjects from the Old Testament are generally of this character; this is more accentuated in the subjects from the New Testament, and the lives of the Apostles and Saints are modelled upon the life of Jesus. And as Jesus suffered for men and endured death for them, all the pious traditions are interwoven with suffering and miraculous deaths. Suffering is the keynote of Christian art. From the suffering imprinted by shame and repentance on the countenances of Adam and Eve when turned out of the terrestrial Paradise to that of the resignation which caused the head of Jesus to recline upon the cross, the whole of the Old and New Testament history is founded in suffering. And if there is not pain there are kindred feelings and internal struggles of the spirit. Sacred tradition is acquainted too with some episodes of bodily contest: the struggle

Birth of Jesus

Adoration of the Magi.

FIG. 199.—RELIEFS ON THE PULPIT OF NICOLÒ PISANO.

(Baptistery, Pisa.)

(*Photos Alinari.*)

[*See page* 368.]

To face p. 370.

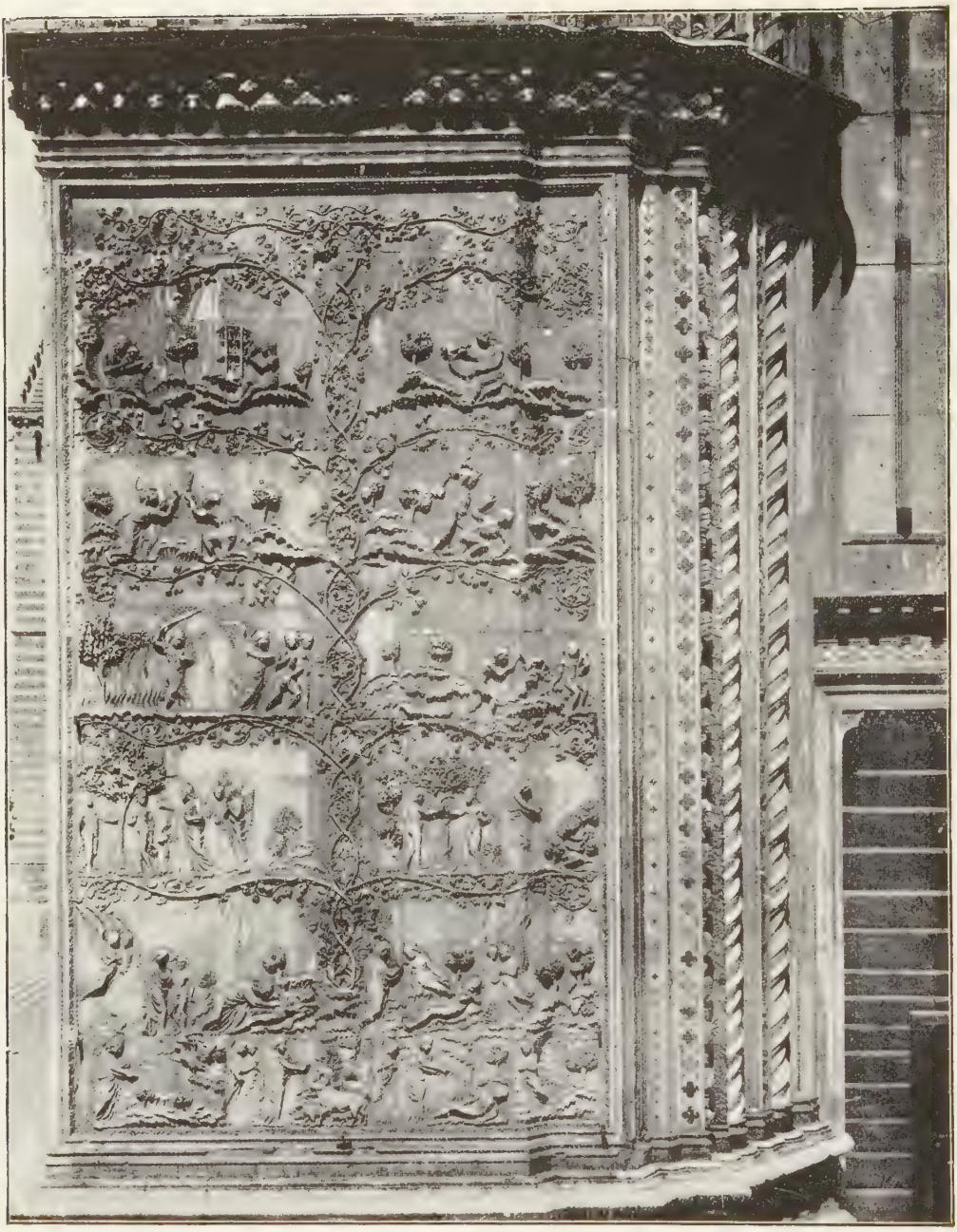


FIG. 200.—RELIEFS OF THE FAÇADE (CATHEDRAL, ORVIETO).

Scenes from the Old Testament.

(Photo Alinari.)

[*See page* 369.]

of Jacob with the Angel, of David and Goliath, of S. George and the Dragon, but these episodes are lost in the midst of the great number which refer to spiritual contests and sufferings and only in rare cases has art drawn inspiration from them. And even in these cases the artist has striven to render the tension of the mind rather than to represent the vigour of the body.

The typical subject of Christian art is generally therefore an action in which the direct or indirect intervention of the divinity is found. For this reason, besides giving the greater weight to the spiritual expression, art throws, as it were, a bridge from earth to heaven. God became man to save man, but His life is not confined to earth, and many of His works were either performed in heaven or were promoted from heaven. Christian art was therefore compelled by its subjects to represent new surroundings, and as the heaven of the religious conception was contrasted with earth it could not, like Greek art, represent the home of the blessed as similar to that of man. When the gods assisted at the contests of men from the heights of Olympus, Olympus was for the Greeks not unlike the earth, and figures both human and divine ended by being often placed on the same plane. If Greek art was obliged to conceive a figure flying between earth and heaven and created Nike and Iris, it had no need to represent earth and heaven one below the other, as in Christian art, and to people both with figures, or to put in Angels and Cherubim flying between.

The nature of the subjects peculiar to Christian art has also determined the character and composition of the separate scenes. The miracle, the supernatural work performed by God or His inspired agents, could not in art be limited to the figure of God and of the beneficiary, or the force of example would disappear. This limitation might have remained in force as long as Christian art remained symbolic in character, but was no longer permissible in the case of art used for the purpose of example and still less so with narrative

art. God had worked for men and before men and for that reason it was necessary that there should be spectators as well as actors in the greater number of the scenes of Christian art. Even in the iconolatrous period when Christian art had been chiefly preoccupied with the relation between the divinity in action and the outside spectator, the spectators taking part in the action had not been abolished, but they also had been made to look outside the picture, so that they seemed to have been cut out of the scene. And narrative art had to give to the spectators an importance almost equal to, if not greater than, that of the actors, because when art is seeking to express a state of mind the spectators may by the ascending or descending scale of this expression afford the greatest help towards the clearness of the narrative. And so Christian art is also through the necessary presence of the spectators in contrast with Greek art. Greek mythological art represented in the contests of the Centaurs and of the Amazons only those taking part in the action and the case is the same with regard to the representations of the love affairs of Zeus and of Aphrodite. If one goddess, Athene, assists at the enterprises of Herakles or Theseus, she is rather a helper than a spectator. But the spectators who were introduced as a crowd, often an inert crowd, into the commemorative Roman reliefs are as indispensable as the actors in Christian narrative art.

Statuary, Relief and Painting in Narrative Art.

What effect would the nature of these subjects have upon the treatment of form in Christian art? In the first place Christian art is necessarily rather an art of painting than of sculpture. It had to represent cycles of action in which innumerable persons often took part. With such subjects statuary would not be at all appropriate. Statuary was in fact little cultivated during the two first periods of Christian art, it was almost limited to an architectural function and to being

Creation of Eve.

Adam and Eve at work.

Adoration of the Magi.

FIG. 201.—RELIEFS OF JACOPO DELLA QUERCIA.

(Chief door of S. Petronio, Bologna.)

(*Photos of Æmilia.*)

[*See page* 369.]

To face p. 372.

FIG. 222.—REliefs by LORENZO GHIBERTI.

Scenes from the Old Testament.

(East door of the Baptistery, Florence.)

(*Photo Alinari.*)

[*See page* 369]

fixed against the wall in the iconolatrous period, and even in the period of narrative art it was less adapted than painting to give life to Christian ideas. From Donatello to Michelangelo individual genius may have created isolated figures of marvellous force of expression and may have summed up in a single figure more feeling than a complex scene might have required from other artists, but even in this period a statue was rarely used alone, and had no religious or ideal connection with a collection of other statues. It is almost an exception to find works conceived to triumph alone, such as Donatello's David, Judith or S. John, the David of Michelangelo, or the Perseus of Benvenuto Cellini, and art was obliged to have recourse to the inheritance of Greek mythology, in which the isolated figure was common, or to Old Testament tradition, in which the complex of figures was less closely associated, or it was obliged to seek out among Christian subjects the figures which lived isolated in Christian tradition like that of the Baptist.

Finally Christian art could not call up the figure of an angelic being, a Prophet, Evangelist, Apostle or Saint, without seeing behind the desired figure which it called up a series of analogous figures which could not be separated from it. And even in the field of allegory when it represented the sacraments, the virtues, the arts, or the months, the Christian conception always aims at a cycle, never at a single figure. In all the funerary monuments art makes use of allegorical statues, but these are always connected with the architecture and co-operate both symmetrically and ideologically in the general effect of the whole.

The statues which decorate sacred edifices, such as the wonderful crown of statues of Or San Michele, the Evangelists in the interior of Santa Maria del Fiore, the figures of Patriarchs, Prophets, Saints and Sibyls in the Campanile of Giotto, are all sets of figures, though different artists may have worked at them at the same time. Even Michelangelo, whose

powerful mind seems to have been capable of putting a world of feeling into isolated figures rather than into groups, as the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel shows, created his finest statues for the complex decoration of funerary monuments—the tombs of Julian and Lorenzo dei Medici. If we have a statue of his that appears fit to dominate alone—his Moses—it must not be forgotten that it was intended with other statues to adorn the tomb of Julius II.

In any case the fact that the subjects of Christian art were not adapted for statuary is proved by the polychrome groups of Nicolò dell' Arca, Guido Mazzoni and Antonio Begarelli. The disagreeable effect of these works is attributed to the mediocrity of the artists, but the figures of which they are composed really seem like enlarged children's toys or museum models, because statuary when it is not organically connected with an architectural basis is not adapted for the representation of scenes and reveals too clearly the absence of unity.

In this congenital inadaptability of Christian art to statuary we have in the first place evidence of the influence of the nature of the subject upon the treatment of form, and in the second place an essential point of detachment between Christian and Greek art. Greek art is the art of statuary *par excellence* not because our judgment is influenced by the absence of a great pictorial art, but because the subjects of Greek art triumphed in their isolation. Literary tradition also tells us that even in painting Greek art preferred isolated figures or groups containing very few figures. The typical subjects of Greek art are fighting or love, and each subject usually contains two, or at the most three figures. Even in the case of complex scenes, such as contests of Giants, Centaurs or Amazons, they are subdivided into several minor groups. Greek art was therefore influenced by its subjects to isolate its figures, and this would be still more the case with figures of divinities as these by tradition lived alone and, except in

certain episodes such as the Gigantomachia or the assemblies of the gods, went about each on his own account after his own adventures. The name of Zeus or of Athene did not necessarily recall that of Dionysos or Ares, while in Christian art the name of a Prophet or an Evangelist brought to the mind all the other figures of the whole series in which the one was only a unit.

Now each branch of art chooses one aspect of nature. What is desired for and is within the capacity of sculpture is generally unsuited for painting. In the absence of a living tradition of statuary many observations and characteristics peculiar to Greek art were unknown to Christian art. Greek art through its cultivation of the isolated figure was obliged to devote special study to the structure of the human body and the arrangement of drapery and had before it problems of limitation of which it succeeded in penetrating the secrets. What is most admired in Greek art, the skilful construction of the figure, the keen sense of the skeleton, the softness or muscularity of the flesh, the harmony of the movement of the limbs and the balance are all the fruit of centuries of incessant study, which is displayed even in mediocre works, but is absent from Christian statuary. The observer whose eye is accustomed to Greek statues will feel when he looks upon a Christian figure, even in such works as the S. George of Donatello, the David of Michelangelo, or the Perseus of Benvenuto Cellini, that its construction is wanting in harmony. The moral expression of the face and also the gesture or attitude will produce more effect upon the beholder, but they show that Christian art has neither felt nor studied the human figure as a unit existing alone in space. In a word, when it is asserted that Greek art possessed the plastic sense and Christian art the pictorial sense, the want of a tradition in isolated statuary is acknowledged.

Of the two branches of sculpture, sculpture in relief was left to Christian art, but here also the nature of the subject

regulated the treatment. Relief lent itself to the representation of scenes containing several figures, and relief was in fact the art in chief of the Romanic and Gothic periods. It remained so as long as Christian art adhered to the didactic and iconolatrous style and was contented to put few figures in its scenes. But when it adopted the narrative style and aimed rather at effect than at content and rivalled painting in the representation of crowded scenes, and when the divine intervention was indicated by showing both heaven and earth in the scene, relief had to struggle with the natural opposition which came from the material and was obliged to change its character. Italian relief of the fourteenth to the fifteenth century gradually loses in corporeal form and acquires pictorial value until the work of Donatello, Ghiberti, and Luca della Robbia and their school becomes a translation of painting into plastic art.

Relief, even when it lent itself to the treatment of complex scenes, could not through the nature of its corporeal form give to the scene the depth of a painting. It was able by a graduation of planes to group more figures in the scene, but could not pass a certain limit except by changing its apparent materiality to an illusive materiality, that is, to use the same means which serve in painting. Roman art, faced by the problem of representing a crowd distributed towards the background, had sought to alter the character of relief by the use of illusive methods. But after Roman relief had touched the apogee during the period of the Flavii and of Trajan it had returned with the Constantinian relief to real materiality.

The Christian narrative relief, having similar problems before it, again tried to force the character of the relief and obtained effects which had been unknown to ancient art. The Italian relief of the fifteenth century is a wonderful creation without antecedents in Greek or Roman art and is the product of an evolution in Christian art, an evolution promoted by the nature of the subjects which it had to treat and by the narrative character accentuated by their treatment.

The symbolic reliefs on the sarcophagi, which had two figures or a very few figures in each scene and which appeared crowded only by reason of the agglomeration of several scenes, was succeeded by the didactic relief, which had divided the scenes and separated the figures so that they stood out clearly from the background. This type of relief with isolated figures, corresponding perfectly with the religious spirit of the time, had been predominant also through the whole Romanic and Gothic period until Christian art instead of teaching desired to narrate. The crowding of figures on the reliefs reappeared not through the union of several scenes, but by several figures taking part in one or few scenes. This is the type of relief which appears with Nicolò Pisano and his school. But this crowding seemed to injure the ensemble, and does not agree with the effect of the art when it has preserved the same substance in the separate figures in different planes. Then there began in this art a new style of work, which is clearly seen on the south door of the Baptistery in Florence, by Andrea Pisano, and in the reliefs of the façade of the Cathedral of Orvieto. In this style of work the same crowd of figures was kept, but the degree of relief was so graduated that instead of the space being encumbered it gave the impression of free circulation in the space. To obtain this result a deceptive value had to be given to the lines and planes of relief which had to contend with drawing and painting. And so arose the relief of Donatello, Ghiberti and their schools, in which the figures in the midst of the natural landscape or against the architectural background show in the treatment of space effects like those of painting.

But though it was a pleasing and skilful production, this relief was a violation of the substantial character which was peculiar to this branch of art. The relief was no longer relief, nor was it painting. Though deceptive in intention it did not reach the perfect illusion which is reached by painting with chiaroscuro. And the monochrome made the slightly

relieved planes appear confused and the lines scarcely indicated. For this reason the relief of the Quattrocento did not continue its course in Christian art. It had attempted to vie with painting in its effects, but having made its greatest effort it found that it could neither surpass nor equal it, and the art of relief therefore, after rising gradually towards the level of painting, gradually returned to its material and actual value. The tradition of the relief of the Quattrocento was certainly not entirely lost, but even in modern works where the illusory treatment of planes is evident, the violation of the natural character of this branch of art appears clearly.

Another attempt of the Christian relief to vie with painting is found in the polychrome terra-cotta work of Luca della Robbia and his followers. Donatello and Ghiberti in their reliefs tried to take the illusive quality of the lines and planes from painting, while Della Robbia took the colour. But it was a colour without light and shade. The effect of these figures standing out so clearly against the background is another proof that when the means of representation belonging to different forms of art are confused the result is not satisfactory. At a time when light and shade attained all the best illusive effects in painting, the colours of the reliefs of Della Robbia seem to cry out against reality and made these works appear backward in comparison with the general progress of art. Only the delicate modelling of the figures could mitigate this effect.

Relief sculpture was inclined to compete with painting in the illusive value of the planes and lines and in the use of colour, showing that the art which set the example at this period was painting. It appeared in reality to be the only one adapted to translate the complex subjects of the Christian religion.

The whole of the Renaissance marked the triumph of painting, and painting attained to results in its means of representation, foreshortening, chiaroscuro and perspective which had never been reached by Greek art—if we may

judge by the industrial works which have been preserved and by the literary traditions relating to the lost works of art. These means were indispensable for the rendering of the narrative character of the scene, because they allowed the representation of a figure in the space as a unit in itself and as an element of a group, and therefore from Giotto onward Christian art laboured at them in order to vary as much as possible the oblique position of the figures so as to obtain material projection and indicate space in the scene.

The single character of this tendency is notable. There was a progressive advance towards pictorial illusion in Italy, in the Rhenish schools, in Flanders and in Spain. Sharpness and firmness of outline diminish in importance, while that of colour perspective increases. Iconolatrous art had reduced to a minimum the effects of light and shade and had necessarily attributed the greatest value to line, figures were drawn rather than painted. The chief endeavour of narrative art on the other hand was to diminish the precision of line, because it takes away from solidity, and to strengthen the light and shade so as to immerse the figure in space. This tendency is seen in the art of Giotto which is nevertheless distinct in outline. The art of the Quattrocento draws an equal balance between outline and light and shade, but leaves the preponderance to outline: compare works of Memling in Flanders and in Italy the works of the Tuscan School from Masaccio to Botticelli. The art of the Cinquecento too is fairly equally balanced, but gives the chief place to colour. This was the glory of Italian art in which Florence and Venice shared the laurels. With the seventeenth century art attains to pictorial illusion: in Italy the masters of the Venetian School and of the schools of Bologna and Rome, with Rembrandt and Rubens in Flanders and Velasquez in Spain, show by the similar direction of their art, as far as the technique of painting is concerned, that this phenomenon is the result of an internal development of

art itself, to which neither ethnical differences nor individual tendencies could oppose a barrier. And if the technique of painting is still a central problem of art, if tentative attempts and aberrations are made in every way, this is the final inheritance of the direction taken by Christian art in the seventeenth century.

Spiritual Expression in Narrative Art.

It was therefore the nature of the subjects which determined the predominant place of painting in Christian art and, what is more important, it also gave the direction to the treatment of form. We have seen that miraculous actions are the characteristic subjects of Christian art. Whether they were performed by God or by chosen persons inspired by God, they are always the manifestation of a state of mind and reveal internal victories of the spirit due to hope and faith. In this Christian art differs from Greek art. The actions performed by the gods or heroes of Greek mythology were contests or love affairs. And the scheme of these actions was one only, for an adventure of love was generally imagined as a contest—the pursuit or the carrying away of a woman. Compare the instances of Thetis and of the Leucippidais. Greek art when it desired to represent its own myths was almost always confronted by a single problem—that of representing two persons in contest. Whether the adversary were an animal or a theriomorphic being, as in the greater number of the adventures of Herakles, Theseus, Meleager, Jason, Bellerophon, Perseus, or in the combats of the Centaurs, or a human being as in the battles of the Giants or the Amazons, or in the carrying off of women by gods or heroes, Greek art has always had to represent men in the tension of bodily strife and has therefore chiefly aimed at the representation of the nude. At this problem it worked for centuries and has created incomparable works, but the Greek artist placed the

expression of the countenance second in importance. Not that this task did not come before him: the joy of the conqueror, the humiliation of the conquered, might have given him the opportunity of representing the state of mind of the combatants, but he did not heed these problems. And for this reason the power of showing in the countenance a certain state of mind was absent from Greek art for nearly the whole of the fifth century. What we call serenity and nobility in the heads of this period is really absence of feeling. Greek art of the period considered the human countenance merely as a part of the body, which had no more right than the rest to special attention. The artist tried to perfect the form of the head just in the same degree as he tried to give an ideal rendering of the form of the foot, the arm, or the thorax. In this purely anatomical perfection it is possible to recognize whatever spiritual expression may be desired, but it is bestowed by the good-will of the admirer. Not till the fourth century, after Phidias had prepared the way, did Greek art find the way to render the expression of the face. It only succeeds, however, in creating two styles—that of Praxiteles and that of Skopas—the soft reflective expression of the former and the tormenting violence of the second. Later or Hellenistic art continued these two styles and exaggerated both, but neither was able to make the expression agree with the state of mind. The children of Niobe, the Giants of the altar of Pergamos and the Laocoon, with their eyes turned to heaven and their mouths wide open, are more like theatrical performers than persons actually suffering. We observe in the Hellenistic period the tendency to seek out among mythological subjects those which show some passion, and the Campanian paintings show the influence of this tendency, but for the most part art has not succeeded in making the result equal the intention. The uniformity of the faces in the Campanian paintings may be an indication that not even the

greater art from which they are derived had been used to give an exact indication of mental conditions.

Christian art on the other hand, when it became a narrative art, took up as a special problem that which had been neglected by Greek art, facial expression. In a spiritual, not bodily, contest the action of Christian art must be chiefly reflected in the movement of the eyes and mouth and in the contraction of the facial muscles. Art necessarily turns its attention to the perfection of bodily form and the naturalness of the drapery, especially when they contribute to the spiritual effect which is sought; but the interest is less keen, for there is the consciousness that these are secondary matters. Christian narrative art was never, like Greek art, the art of the nude and of drapery, although it has so far produced some masterpieces—in the nude, for example, we may turn to the often used subjects, of Adam and Eve turned out of the earthly Paradise, Christ on the cross or the deposition, or S. Sebastian—it is the art of the state of mind. Nothing better than these subjects, in which the problem of the nude was also before the artist, could show that Christian art aimed at spiritual expression, for the attention of the spectator is concentrated upon the countenance of the figure.

And in the representation of the state of mind Giotto initiates the new direction of art. He was the first to feel that in the countenance of those taking part in the action, the action itself was summed up. And from Giotto onward through the Quattrocento and the Cinquecento to the Seicentisti, the latest of the great masters of Christian art, the expression of the face has been the fundamental problem. It has been tried in many ways, before which the styles of Praxiteles and Skopas are a poor thing. It is true that one can understand how Christian art from Giotto reached the depth of human expression in Michelangelo through the work of Masaccio, Pier dei Franceschi and Luca Signorelli and

how it threw its last spirit into the works of the Bolognese or Roman School of the seventeenth century—that is, one can construct a central line of development in this search for the external expression of the mind, but how many original directions, how many other styles have established themselves beside this one which has passed victorious through three centuries?

When we think that in that same first half of the fifteenth century in which Beato Angelico had painted his figures in their celestial beauty (Fig. 203), Andrea del Castagno in his Last Supper in Sant' Apollonia in Florence (Fig. 204) made so strong and vulgarly expressive a collection of types, and that in that same second half of the fifteenth century in which Mantegna expressed with such crudeness the suffering and death of his Dead Christ (Fig. 205), Francia gave the sweet and tranquil figure of his S. Stephen (Fig. 206), we can understand the riches of individual force possessed by Christian narrative art and how full of inspiration were the subjects to be treated. It was no wonder then that men of such different kinds of genius as Raphael and Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci and Titian could have worked at the same time in Italy in the sixteenth century, and that Flanders could possess such different spirits as Rubens and Rembrandt, and how Spain could possess both Velasquez and Murillo in the same seventeenth century. Individuality was the essential condition of life for Christian art as uniformity had been for Greek art.

Individual genius could not, however, save Christian art from that decadence to which Greek art had already passed on. When religious art aims at the idealization of the human form that it may serve to clothe divine beings, it matters little whether this idealization is accomplished with the nude figure as in Greek art or as in Christian art by the expression of the face. The time will come when the equilibrium between the subject and the form will be destroyed, the value of form will be accentuated and the process of the humanization of the divine figure will begin. Just as Greek art arrived at creating

purely human figures like the crouching Aphrodite of Doidalses, Christian art, after having sought to endow its figures with an expression worthy of a divine being—the Prophets and Sibyls of Michelangelo mark the apogee of this art—it humanizes the state of mind of the divine beings and makes them into heroes of terrestrial drama.

The art of the seventeenth century is governed by this tendency, but this tendency is the forerunner of death, and after the seventeenth century Christian art as a religious art comes to an end. An artist here and there may still have attempted a religious subject, but consciously or unconsciously he is still on the way to the humanization of the drama of religion.

One movement of art seems to have followed a different path—that of Pre-Raphaelitism—but it shows a singular resemblance to the archaistic movement in Greek art. During the Hellenistic and Roman period an artistic current brought archaic forms back into vogue: not the pure archaic forms, but those which had possibly been conventionalized by the sculptor Kallimachos, a late survivor of the fifth century B.C., a seeker after subtle and skilful grace. In the same way the Pre-Raphaelites turned not to the pure primitives but to the late survivors. Sandro Botticelli and his companions were conventional and skilled survivors in comparison with Masaccio or Andrea del Castagno, who preceded them, and in comparison with Pier dei Franceschi, Mantegna or Luca Signorelli, their contemporaries.

Modern art, like Hellenistic art, understood that violence cannot be used to the dead, and being no longer able to treat religious subjects, turned its humanizing capacity to the outside world and represented men and nature, and established itself in portrait-painting and landscape. The tendency to allegory, to symbolism and philosophy proves that the aspiration to something beyond the human and the real is concealed in this art and that it contains a residuum of the religious spirit, but that this spirit has turned to other paths.

FIG. 203.—CORONATION OF THE VIRGIN.

Beato Angelico. (Uffizi, Florence.)

(*Photo Brogi.*)

[*See page* 383.]

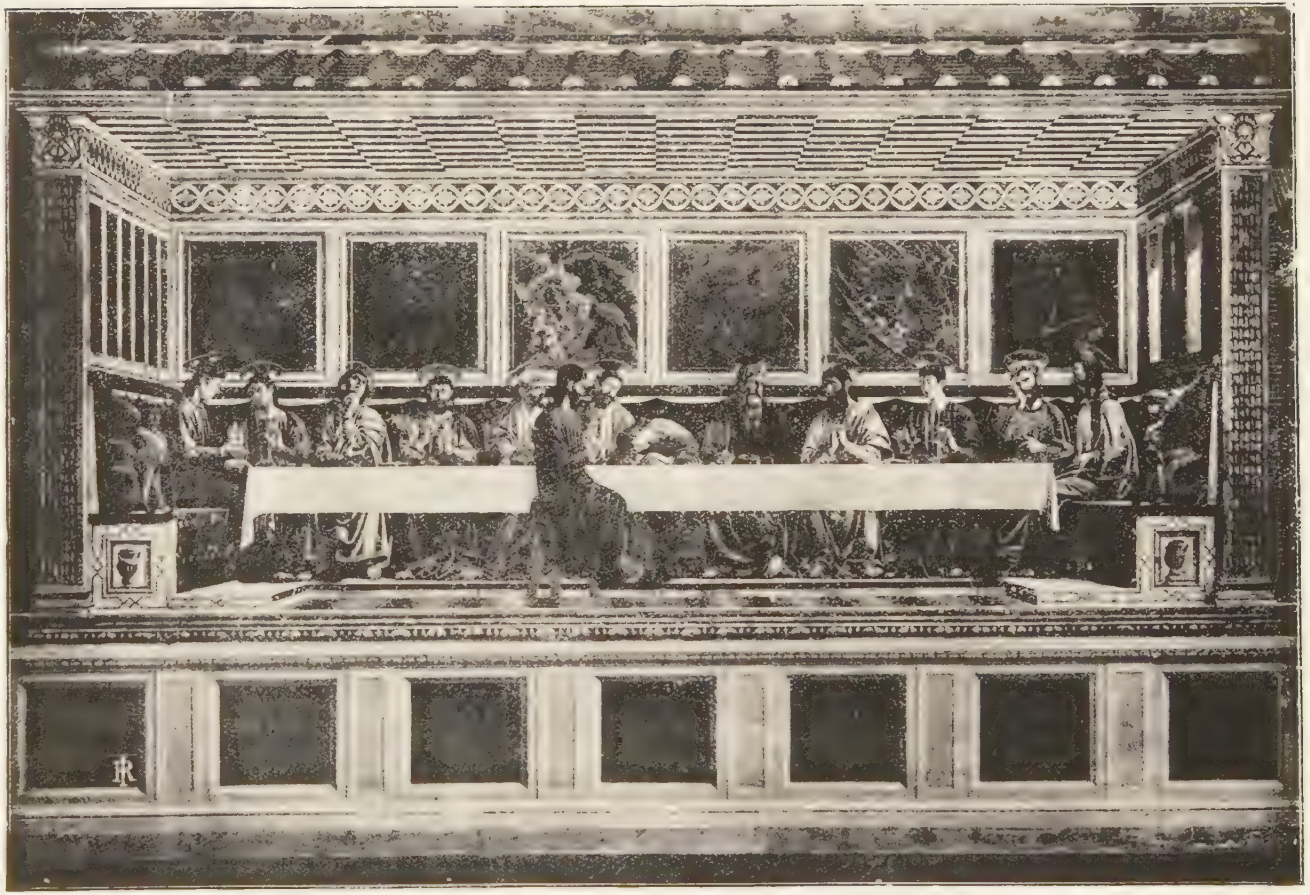


FIG. 204.—THE LAST SUPPER.

Fresco by Andrea del Castagno. (Convent of S. Apollonia, Florence.)

(*Photo Brogi.*)

[*See page* 383.]

Christianity

In Greek art the influence of mythological decoration with its subjects of movement and action had modified the forms of images so as to make them into figures of real life. Christian narrative art has done the same thing, for it has destroyed the iconolatrous inertia of the cult image. The ancient conventions are certainly preserved for a longer time in these images for the same reason for which Phidias made his Athene Parthenos so solemnly rigid. But when we pass from the Rucellai Madonna attributed to Cimabue (Fig. 207), which is nevertheless far from the Byzantine inertia, to the Madonna dei Linaioli of Beato Angelico (Fig. 208), and from this to the Madonna of Mantegna in S. Zeno at Verona (Fig. 209) and finally to the Madonna di San Sisto of Raphael (Fig. 210), though there is still a certain conventionality from which art does not willingly separate, yet the type of the Virgin and Child appears at the same time idealized and humanized. Gone is the magical preoccupation of the iconolatrous period in which the worshipper egoistically claimed for himself only the protection of the divine image, for which reason he desired the image to be represented as inactive and in full face. He no longer asks help of the image: it is now admired for its beauty of form, its nobility of expression, its maternal affection, its filial confidence, for its ideal and human qualities and for the feelings which it excites.

Cult Images in Narrative Art.

In the creation of these cult images narrative art has cancelled what had appeared as a backward step in Christianity, the establishment of iconolatry in the preceding period. The Reformation had no reason to condemn the cult of images just at the very time when the idea that the image of the divinity should be the object not of worship but of admiration, that it was not for the protection of man but to place before his eyes the purity and nobility of divine beings, reached its noblest expression in the works of Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael and Michelangelo. It is therefore in no small

degree owing to this narrative art of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries that the Catholic Church has been able to maintain her power beyond the Rhine and the Alps.

The idealization and humanization of cult images explains why the figure of Jesus on the cross becomes less frequent than it had been in the iconolatrous period. The images of the Crucified are less numerous than those representing the Virgin and Child. The reason of this is not so much the increasing cult of the Virgin as the fact that the Crucifixion is less adapted to the humanization to which narrative art was tending. The suffering of Christ on the cross was too austerely sacred a subject to be adapted to a representation full of human feeling. The succeeding phase, the deposition from the cross, was preferred by art to the Crucifixion. Human grief could be better expressed in the figures weeping round the dead Christ, especially that maternal grief which corresponded in the last act of life to the equally maternal affection with which in the first act of life the Virgin held her Child to her breast.

And the rarity of the representations of the Crucified, that is, of the solitary figure which might appear as an idol to the eyes of believers, is additional testimony that Christian narrative art tended to diminish the protective value of cult images. In the figures of the Virgin and Child, the two figures bound by the ties of maternal and filial love, even the most iconolatrous worshipper must see, besides the representation of the divinity, the expression of a mental state, and it was thus partly freed from the magical idea of the image.

Christian Architecture.

Christianity began its course as a funerary religion. And if its earliest attempts at plastic art aimed at an object beyond this world its architecture, too, commences with sepulchral construction. The earliest Christian monuments are the catacombs, the subterranean sepulchres in which the faithful assembled to do honour to

FIG. 205.—DEAD CHRIST.
Andrea Mantegna (Brera, Milan).
(*Photo Brogi.*) [*See page* 383.]

FIG. 206.— S. STEPHEN.

Francesco Francia. (Borghese Gallery, Rome.)

(*Photo Brogi.*)

[*See page* 383.]

the dead. It has been said that the catacombs owe their origin to the defence of the cult against Pagan persecution. In some cases certainly these intricate underground passages may have served as a place of refuge for the members of the new creed, but the catacombs as a sepulchral construction are not very different from the subterranean tombs which under so many different civilizations, from the Egyptian to the Etruscan, had been prepared as a resting-place for the dead. The catacombs were at first, therefore, simply tombs; not places of concealment for the new religion, but places for the protection of the dead. In fact, the Hebrews in Rome and the adepts of other Eastern cults made use of similar constructions in the same way.

But while other peoples have developed special architectural elements either in the plan or elevation of the hypogeum, Christianity, with that lack of care for form which distinguished the cemetery paintings and the reliefs on the sarcophagi, left these tunnelled passages in their natural state. Even where they are enlarged into chambers they have no fixed form or proportions. The chief care has been used on the decoration, which is principally disposed upon the ceiling and the arcosolium.

But the symbolical and allegorical art of the cemetery paintings and sarcophagi was of relatively short duration, and in the same way the duration of the cemeteries themselves as the only sacred place of meeting of the Christian communities was equally short-lived. The Christians emerged from the dark hiding-places of the catacombs to the light of the sun, not so much because the day of persecution was over and the new faith had found a firm foothold in the world as because the spirit of Christianity was changed. From being the religion of death it had begun to be the religion of life, just as its symbolical and allegorical art had been transformed into didactic and exemplary art and now held a rule for human life rather than a suggestion of the life beyond the grave. Christianity therefore began to erect other buildings for the open exercise

of the cult in public. But as the primitive cemeteries, even when no longer in use for their purpose, remained for centuries the resort of devout pilgrimages on account of the relics of Saints and Martyrs contained in them, this cemeterial character of the first place of the Christian cult was long preserved by the presence of a crypt or subterranean church, and was never cancelled in Christian architecture, for the sepulchre has always remained connected with the church. And so Christianity, which had the death of its God as the culminating point of its conception, has connected with it the death of man and established in its architecture a bond which would have seemed repugnant to the religions of antiquity. The Egyptians sometimes placed in the temples a copy of the statue of the Ka of the defunct that it might share in the life of the god, but no Egyptian, Greek or Roman would have contaminated the house of the deity by the presence of the dead.

Christianity then, though it preserved in its later architecture the signs of its funerary origin, provided special buildings for divine worship. And as its doctrines contained no special point which caused one form rather than another to be chosen for this edifice, since it had simply to be a place of meeting for the members of the faith, Christian civilization, after it had raised itself upon the ruins of Rome, did as it has done in all its other manifestations and adapted the Pagan buildings to its own purposes. And rather than the ancient temples she adapted the public buildings which were used for public assemblies, viz., parts of the thermæ and basilicas. So, too, from some polygonal hall of the thermæ, or more probably from that type of central building which the passion for fountains had diffused throughout the Hellenistic and Roman world, the baptistery was derived.

But while the baptistery has preserved its form almost intact through the whole period of Christian architecture the Pagan public buildings adapted as churches soon gave way to a new

FIG. 207.—RUCELLAI MADONNA, ATTRIBUTED TO CIMABUE.

(Church of S. Maria Novella, Florence.)

(*Photo Brogi.*)

[*See page* 385.]

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FIG. 208.—MADONNA DEI LINAIOLI.

Beato Angelico. (Uffizi, Florence.)

(Photo Alinari.)

[See page 385]

type of building created by Christianity—the church on the cruciform plan. It cannot be decided with certainty whence arose first the idea of permanently tracing the sign of martyrdom as the plan of the building to be dedicated to the Lord, and still less can it be decided whether this idea arose from the adaptation of Pagan buildings or parts of buildings in which the same arrangement had proceeded from purely practical requirements. If there are many reasons for regarding the East as the place of origin of the cruciform church, even if this is the Greek cross with short arms of equal length, this plan was in any case early diffused over the whole of the Christian world, and has always remained an unchangeable feature of its religious architecture.

Several other features were combined with this cruciform plan, such as the arrangement of the nave; and the history of the church, the longest history to be found in architecture, shows in its innumerable variations a creative capacity superior to that of Greek architecture. But if we consider this building as a whole and seek out its most special characteristic, we note that it has always been a closed building intended to be seen from the inside. This feature establishes a distinction from the Greek temple, which was an external building, and it would seem at first sight as if the Christian religion should be regarded as connected with the Eastern cults, especially the Egyptian religion. But this resemblance is only in appearance. The Christian church being intended as a meeting-place for the believers, and especially as the descendant of the ancient funerary cult, has remained a closed building, but has never had, like the Egyptian temple, a portion reserved for a few initiates. It is open to all in its full extension, the faithful can see every corner of it and the priest carries on the mysteries in view of the people. The church is a closed-in building, but its interior is open, and hence its spaciousness, which is in such contrast to the crowded interior of the Egyptian temple. And the church inclines to spaciousness not only in its ground plan, but also in its elevation, and that aspiration towards heaven which is at the foundation of the

Christian faith has consciously or unconsciously contributed thereto. When the believer in the church raises his eyes to heaven he would feel the oppression of a low building, which would press him down to earth. For this reason the height of the church gradually rises till Gothic architecture, favoured by the tradition of the country, yielded the boldest solution of the problem. And if Gothic architecture rapidly conquered the whole of Europe, even the countries which, like Italy, by reason of the diversity of climatic and topographical conditions must find its external forms inappropriate, this conquest is due to its being able to satisfy by its forms this latent desire of faith—aspiration—which has also had some influence on the development of the bell-tower and the cupola.

The arrangement of the decoration in the churches also reflects the character of the Christian religion in the various phases which made their mark on plastic art. On account of the closed form of the building the decoration is mostly in the interior, but varies its position and proportions with the different periods. It was spread like a sacred roll upon the walls during the exemplary and didactic periods: the band above the columns and the arch of the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome is an instance of this. And just because this art is didactic and exemplary it is applied to external decoration also, as on the door of Santa Sabina in Rome. In the period of iconolatrous art it tends to fill the apse with isolated and gigantic figures to which the eyes of the faithful may be the more easily turned, but the rest of the wall surface is sometimes occupied by scenes of action of which the subjects are taken from the Old and New Testaments.

During the last centuries of the iconolatrous period at the commencement of the religious renaissance the decoration was frequently placed on the outside of the Romanic and Gothic churches upon the façade and the doors. And there it remained through the period of narrative art, till relief sculpture, which had attempted to rival the effects of painting,

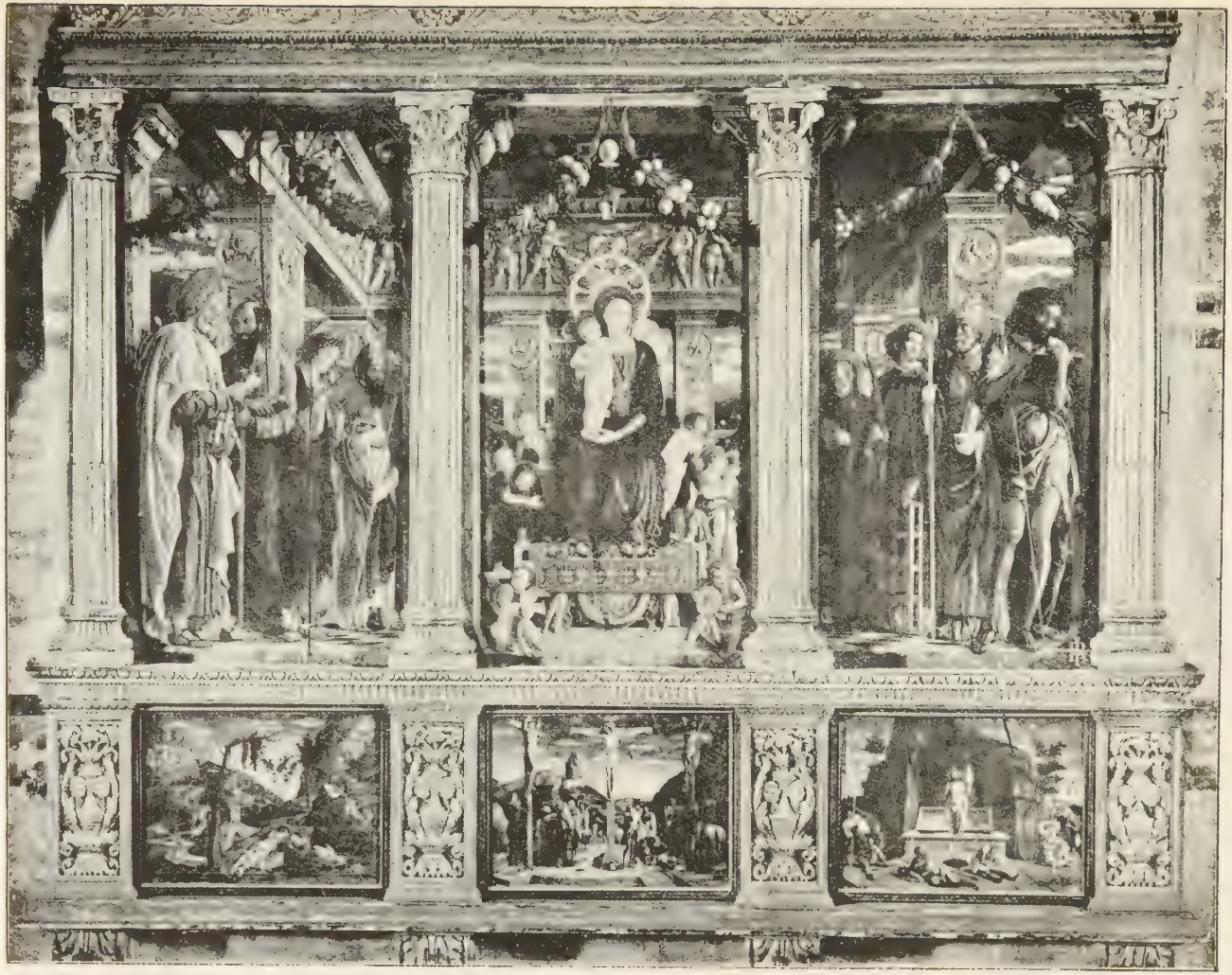

FIG. 200.—MADONNA.

Andrea Mantegna. (Church of S. Zeno, Verona.)

(*Photo Brogi.*) [*See page* 385.]

FIG. 210.—THE SISTINE MADONNA.

Raphael. (Dresden Gallery.)

(*Photo Alinari*)

[*See page* 385.]

gave up the struggle and almost entirely disappeared from the front of the churches. But narrative painting had in the meantime again overspread all the interior of the building and ousted from the apse all the isolated figures which had been predominant there, and with the prevalent passion for narration not only covered the walls but also invaded ceilings and cupolas.

These changes, which are due to the transformation of the religious spirit, may be perceived not only in the plastic decoration, but also in the simple architectural decoration. The church had been an absolutely undecorated building as far as the outside was concerned until the appearance of the Romanic and Gothic churches. The Romanic church had an architectural decoration upon the façade. The Gothic church sometimes had the decoration on the sides also. The latest appearance of originality in this field was the Baroque with its sumptuous façades. This style of art was inspired by the Jesuits, who used it as a weapon against Reform and tried to bring back the faithful by its richness and magnificence, as if to make them feel materially the power of the Church. And so niches, pediments, brackets and pilasters, for the most part with no organic function but simply as a decorative feature, occupied the place which a century before had been occupied by sacred images or by pious histories represented in relief, while gilded stucco and variegated marbles glittered and shone where in another age painted scenes from the Bible and the Lives of the Saints had been. This is the levelling age. Many of the frescoes of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries disappeared, possibly beneath a layer of whitewash, and it is also the period after which religion no longer seems capable of inspiring either plastic art or architecture. The churches which are still erected for the needs of the cult repeat to satiety, sometimes with stupid mistakes, the old Romanic and Gothic styles. Just in the same way in the Hellenistic and Roman periods, with the same poverty

of religious inspiration, the new temples had showed poor copies and combined the motives of the ancient buildings.

If the most important chapter of the history of Christian architecture is that treating of the church, there are of course other buildings, such as the baptistery already mentioned and the convent, but neither of these contains any special problem of which the solution could occupy the efforts of centuries. As a dwelling-house the convent has no pretension to be richly decorated, but it contained the cloister, a portico, intended as the meeting-place of the monks, which partook more or less of the character of the piazza of the town where the lay society would meet together. The religious community therefore, when its members were brought from the isolation of their cells, made them again, as it were, citizens of one city.

After what we have said as to the reason of the absence of funerary art in the Christian religion we shall understand the lack of funerary architecture. This want seems a strange thing when we consider that Christianity arose as a funerary religion and had in the catacombs and the cemeteries its earliest architectural constructions. But it is a phenomenon which soon becomes clear when we reflect that funeral architecture has but one object, that of building a house for the dead and that this house did not need a religion which attributed so little importance to the body and which imagined a life beyond the grave as a life of the spirit alone. If Christianity had begun with catacombs and cemeteries it was because by the cult of the dead it performed the cult of the divinity: once the church was built for the divinity, the cult of the dead had fewer architectural needs and became dependent on the divine cult. In fact, in the scanty funerary architecture created by Christianity we find this general characteristic: it is not only entirely bound to the church, but it repeats the forms of the church, for instance in the Gothic cornices, in the Renaissance and Baroque styles which

decorate the tombs. And above all, this funerary architecture is on a modest scale. Even in the case of isolated and independent monuments, such as the tombs of the Scaligeri in Verona, they are of small size. Monumental tombs such as those of Egypt, the dynastic tombs of Asia Minor or those of the Roman Emperors, are unknown to Christianity. And as Christian architecture has been poorly inspired in the building of churches after the seventeenth century, funerary architecture has suffered from equal poverty of inspiration. Separated from the church for hygienic reasons, the modern cemetery is being filled with erections in which we find no spark of originality prompted by a sincere feeling for death, but a crowd of imitations of all earlier styles of architecture.

Christian Literature.

Christian art was symbolical and allegorical in the first centuries, it became didactic and exemplary from the fourth to the sixth century, was chiefly iconolatrous in the long period of the Middle Ages until in the dawn of the religious and humane renaissance from the thirteenth century onward it declared itself as a narrative art. During its long vicissitudes it never gave the lie to its original character of art at the service of a historic religion which, while promising future happiness to the faithful, chiefly looked back upon the past. This character may have been stifled for several centuries during the iconolatrous period, but recovered all its vigour during the narrative period, regulated the choice of subjects and the treatment of form, and determined the triumphal rise of Christian art from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century. And its historic character, now oppressed, now victorious, has marked the direction of the whole of Christian literature.

Christian literature, located between the opposite poles, both historical, of Hebrew and of Greek literature, has itself been historical from its origin. The Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles—and we must include the Apocryphal books—are

works intended to collect and record the past. How little do we find that is doctrinal or didactic in this first period! The contents of the very letters of S. Paul, and of other Saints too, are doctrinal with a historical foundation. They teach with an appeal to the authority of the Bible. And even the apocalyptic literature is historical literature—besides the apocalypse of S. John we refer to the apocryphal one of S. Peter—it is directly descended from the prophetic literature of the Hebrews which made history in advance. And symbolic and allegorical art corresponds to this evangelical and apostolic literature.

After this comes the period of the Fathers of the Church, and their work was accompanied by a considerable production of Hagiography—pious legends of the saints—though these legends were many of them fixed in literature only at a later date. This was the period of discussions on testimony to the faith, when instruction was sought from the facts of religion, when other religious heroes modelled their life and death upon the life and death of Jesus. This literature coincides with the didactic and exemplary tendency in art.

The glorious centuries of the works of the Fathers and of Hagiographic literature are followed by the dark years of the Middle Ages. Christian literature becomes rigid and inert, hymns are composed in honour of the divinity, whose protection is anxiously implored, but the historic sense of the religion which it serves is lost. It is the period of iconolatry also in art.

But the germs of the religious renaissance fermented in the bosom of the Middle Ages. The Renaissance declared itself in the first place for the Scholastic philosophy which recalled it to life and awakened the questions of the faith which had been disregarded by the Christian Church after its victory over heresy. It supplied subjects for the literature of the new religious orders, especially that of the Franciscans, and finally created the *Divine Comedy*, a work of religion and history. The beginnings of narrative art correspond to this period.

Christianity

With the poem of Dante closes the classical period of Christian literature. It closes much earlier than this period in art, for we should have to go down to the time of Michelangelo to find the spirit of Dante in painting and sculpture, but this is explained by the more rapid course of literature. The Homeric poems in Greece appeared long before mythological art could create anything in keeping with them.

After this period Christianity can boast of ecstatic letter-writers, polished biographers of the saints, remarkable preachers, subtle theologians. It possesses an accumulation of moralizing and apologetic literature of the Reformation and the Counter-reformation, new poems on subjects taken from the Old and New Testaments and from the historical vicissitudes of the Church—while the old material is worked up again and both idealized and humanized, but nothing new is added to the original creations of the spirit of Christianity from the Gospels to Dante.

CONCLUSION

This examination of religion in relation to plastic art has enabled us to follow the changes in the religious conception in the history of mankind. The sense of magic which asked protection from the divinity becomes weakened and the historic sense, which venerated the deity for his past, has increased.

And man has come to this historic conception in religion by a vital necessity of civilization. Step by step as his contest with surrounding nature has become fiercer, and he has perceived that instead of expecting to be protected by higher spirits it was better to help the work of nature by investigating its natural laws, man has begun to feel himself ruler of the universe.

It is often said that magic, the action upon nature which is manifested by primitive religions, is founded upon the same principle as science, and that it is in fact a science which has lost its way, for it knows that the phenomena of the universe are regulated by the laws of causality, and it only errs in its perception of these relations by thinking that it can produce them at will. The truth is that magic and science are the antipodes. Magic is a compulsion that man desires to exercise upon nature, either directly or indirectly, by means of beings which have dominion over it. Science, on the other hand, is the acknowledgment of the laws which govern nature and acquiesces in these laws. With magic man wills, with science man submits. With the one he believes that he will rule, with the other he knows that he is governed. But the result is that with magic man obtains nothing by commanding, but with science by obedience he turns to his advantage all that nature offers. That the two terms "magic" and "science" are in opposition is proved by the fact that science, by which we understand the knowledge and application of the laws of nature in so far as they offer advantage to man, advances step by step as magic retires. All the conquests of human civilization from the pastoral art to agriculture and industry are

owing to the gradual progress of scientific knowledge. Man has gradually discovered the laws of natural phenomena and has taken up his position with regard to nature not as the fool who waits, but as the able man who wills.

And then he has deprived the superior beings of a great part of the dominion which he had attributed to them, and has seen that their action is useless once it is known that natural phenomena are governed by the laws of causality.

But when once the superior beings had been deprived of direct dominion over the phenomena of nature present and future, though granting that they had given the first initial movement, and when men had been freed from the constant anxiety for their future on earth, as it was now easy to regulate it with regard to what most directly concerned them, their preoccupation for the life beyond the grave was also weakened. It had, in fact, been imagined as a continuation of the life on earth, and when man was no longer so heavily oppressed by the difficulties of this life and from the time when it seemed assured for the future this confidence was sure to reflect upon the life beyond the grave. Besides, why go on asking the god for food for the life beyond the grave when the action of the god was no longer necessary even for the procuring of real food on earth? And thus the life beyond the tomb became spiritualized and its needs diminished. Step by step, as the magic sense became weakened in mankind, the cult of the dead lost its materialistic character, and though the custom of certain offerings was kept up, the cult was reduced to the preservation of the pious memory of the dead.

Being thus kept from meditating on the future, man turned to look back on the past, for it was a prolongation of his life to remove the boundary indefinitely in another direction. Only those who are familiar with the literature and in a general way with the life of the people who are constantly preoccupied with the future can correctly appreciate what a change in the whole conception of life is represented by this

detachment of the eyes from the future to turn them to the past. Our modern civilizations are saturated with history: we think and act only under the pressure of what has been; the life of uncivilized peoples is saturated with the future: they think and act only under the pressure of what will be.

To contemplate the past is to submit to life without having the power of modifying it and to accept what it has offered, to apply to the comprehension and utilization of the past the same principle which scientific knowledge applies to the comprehension and utilization of the future; it is the recognition by man that he must submit to nature as it is, that he cannot expect to deviate from his path. Therefore it is not magic and science but science and history who are sisters. They are like the faces of a double herm which are turned in opposite directions.

The appearance of the one and the other in the midst of civilization has necessarily transformed the religious conception. When the importance of the future action of the divinity has been reduced to a minimum his sphere of action, like that of man, had to be enlarged in the direction of the past. A religious conception with a record of the past must be attained. In this way came about the complete triumph of the mythology of the Greek religion. Mythology gave way to history, and the two last great religions which conquered mankind, Buddhism and Christianity, are founded on the historical value of the actions of their founders.

From the moment when religion was history, religion was a completed fact and not an action to be fulfilled by the divinity; from the moment when the divinity was detached from the natural phenomenon which continued beyond his direct intervention it could only show actions in relation to man; we can understand why the noblest actions which humanity could conceive were attributed to these founders of religion, so that they were imagined as the most helpful and kind men who had ever appeared on earth. The gods of Egypt and Greece were for the most part not moral, but

Buddha and Christ were moral because they were by tradition in the highest degree just.

And thus religion and morality, which had an independent origin because the one regulates the relations between God and man and the other the relations between man and man, the one stretching from earth to heaven, the other crawling on the ground, have after many attempts at union even on the part of the rudest of religions at last become bound together and morality has become as it were the handmaid of religion. The first effect of this union is seen in the transformation of the sacred books, for the narration of the moral fact has taken the place of the account of the natural phenomenon in theological form. The Old Testament prepared the way for the religious works of Christianity. The second effect is shown in the organization of the whole religion in a corpus of moral doctrines which, because they were moral, were to be diffused among mankind. Proselytism became established with Buddhism and Christianity. There had already been some attempts at this in a lesser degree by Hebraism and the Oriental cults, because they too contained moral doctrines. Earlier religions, though great and remarkable in their manifestations, had been confined to their own country and people. And for this reason we have spoken of a religion of Egypt, of Babylon and of Assyria, of Greece, Etruria and Rome, but only when we came to Buddhism and Christianity could we discuss two religions which were tied to no country and no people. Greece had indeed been able to spread into Etruria and Rome her religious art but not her religion.

In conclusion, we find that what characterizes the progress of the religious conception is that which characterizes the progress of human civilization in all its aspects—the gradual discovery of the laws of nature and the gradual widening of the horizon of life in the direction of the past: it is the triumph of science and history together and the annihilation of magic; and to all this let us add the strengthening of

morality. It matters little that the members of the lowest strata of society have recourse to magic, though they are disciples of a historic religion and that the history of this religion adorns the truth with legend and unhappily marks periods of moral barbarism. What is certain is that only the consolidation of scientific knowledge and of the historic sense could cause such religions to arise.

And now we can see the position occupied by plastic art in relation to religion. Art placed itself at the service of religion for a magic function. The forms which it created were for action, not for contemplation: they had an active, not a passive character. And Egyptian art remained closed in by this principle. It seems to us repugnant but it has never given the lie to its origin.

When art, on the other hand, remained at the service of religion but cancelled this magical function, it represented gods and heroes by their actions and had to represent them as men, it created figures not to act but to be looked at. It made these figures beautiful and great and as noble as it could, but at last it understood that its bond with religion was no longer a necessary bond and it no longer felt the force of inspiration. This happened to Greek art and to Christian art. Once the gods had to be represented as men it was the same thing as to represent real men in action. And these actions lent themselves equally with those of the gods to display form. And so the separation was made between art and religion.

But man would never have reached this high standard of perfection in the representation of men if the way had not been pointed out by religion. Man would never have set himself the task of representing men because of the beauty and nobility of their form. The form of men appeared beautiful and noble because it had served to clothe the gods. Man therefore possessed art because he had religion, but he possessed a great art, such as Greek and Christian art, because when the sense of magic was destroyed he vivified these religions by a content of myth and history.

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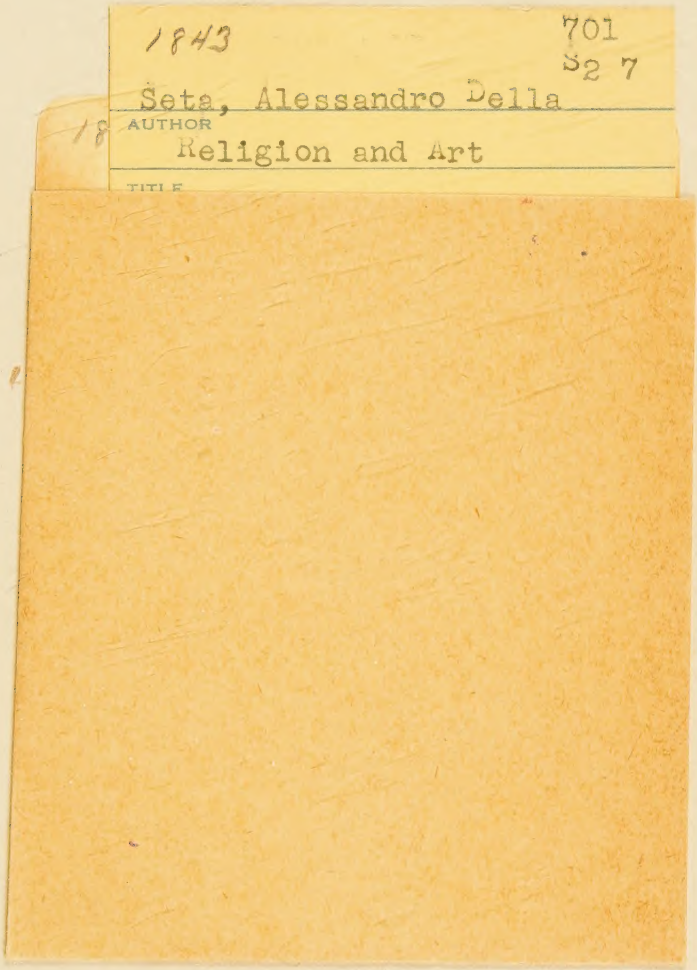

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